GMA to media: Gov't to end killings, libel suits

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

IN A BID TO IMPROVE HER RELATIONS WITH the media, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday promised to end the killing of journalists and protect them from libel suits and arbitrary arrest.

The President hosted a dialogue in Malacañang with representatives of local and foreign news organizations and told them she would

GMA/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Friday, June 15, 2007 ★★ 15 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 187 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

AFP's 'bad boy' can now summon top brass

By Dona Pazzibugan and Christine Avendaño

HOW WILL ANTONIO Trillanes IV do in the Senate? Some ex-generals are counting the ways.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, a former chief of the Philip-

AFP'S/ A23

Trillanes to probe AFP death squads

ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

LAST FLIGHT OUT: Neighborhood kids say goodbye to the 54-ha historic airport in Iloilo City, which ceased operations on Tuesday after 70 years of operation. It had seen off presidents, a Pope, dignitaries and beauty queens. The airport was transferred 20 km north of the city.

Says special teams under control of intelligence

By Fe Zamora and Christine O. Avendaño

NOW THAT HE HAS been elected senator, should the Armed Forces of the Philippines have anything to fear?

"They should not fear anything if they are doing their duties ... I am not a vindictive person and I don't take things personally. I will only do what I should do," Antonio Trillanes IV, 35, told reporters yesterday.

But among the issues that the former Navy lieutenant plans to tackle in the Senate is one that could put him on a collision course with the AFP—the killing and forced disappearance of leftist activists.

In an earlier interview with the INQUIRER at his detention center in Fort Bonifacio, Trillanes said he would call for a Senate inquiry into the spate of political killings and forced disappearances that had continued unabated since President Macapagal-Arroyo took power in January 2001.

The human rights group Karapatan has listed 864 extrajudicial killings and 194 disappearances under the Arroyo administration.

But Trillanes, a 1995 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, was emphatic about the ob-

TRILLANES/ A23

PDI PHOTO

SENATOR-ELECT TRILLANES: The buoyant hopes, the confidence were there even 10 days ago when he held a presscon in Fort Bonifacio.

Ex-Navy officer makes history

By Nikko Dizon and Jocelyn R. Uy

OAKWOOD MUTINY LEADER Antonio Trillanes IV has won a seat in the Senate, making history as the country's first former military officer to be elected senator while detained on coup d'etat charges.

Trillanes, a candidate of the Genuine Opposition (GO), the sealed his victory yesterday with the returns from Surigao del Norte. He is to be proclaimed the 11th in the winning circle of 12 senators this morning by the Commission on Elections sitting as the National Board of Canvassers (NBC).

"We believe it is already mathematically impossible to overcome the lead of Trillanes, in view of which the board has decided to have a partial proclamation again in [his] favor," Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said before adjourning the NBC session at noon yesterday.

EX-NAVY/ A23

Old Iloilo airport sees last of happy landings

By Ma. Diosa Labiste and Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE HISTORIC Iloilo airport, the fourth busiest in the country, ceased operations on Tuesday after 70 years of serving millions of passengers.

The old airport in Mandurriao district ended operations following the commercial opening on Wednesday of the new Iloilo International Airport in Santa Barbara and Cabatuan towns, 20 kilometers north of this city.

The last plane out of the old airport was a Manila-bound Cebu Pacific Air at 6:20 p.m. on Tuesday.

Built in 1937, the old airport is located 5 km from downtown. It was so conveniently accessible that taxis, jeepneys and tricycles could unload their passengers a few meters from its front door.

Annual passenger traffic at the old airport was estimated at 700,000 the last two years, making it the busiest domestic airport in the country.

The old airport was also fourth among the busiest airports in the country in terms of

OLD ILOILO/ A10

E-jeeps coming; 1st in Southeast Asia

By TJ Burgonio

THE JEEPNEY'S ELECTRIC-POWERED VERsion will soon be weaving through the streets of Bacolod City to pick up passengers.

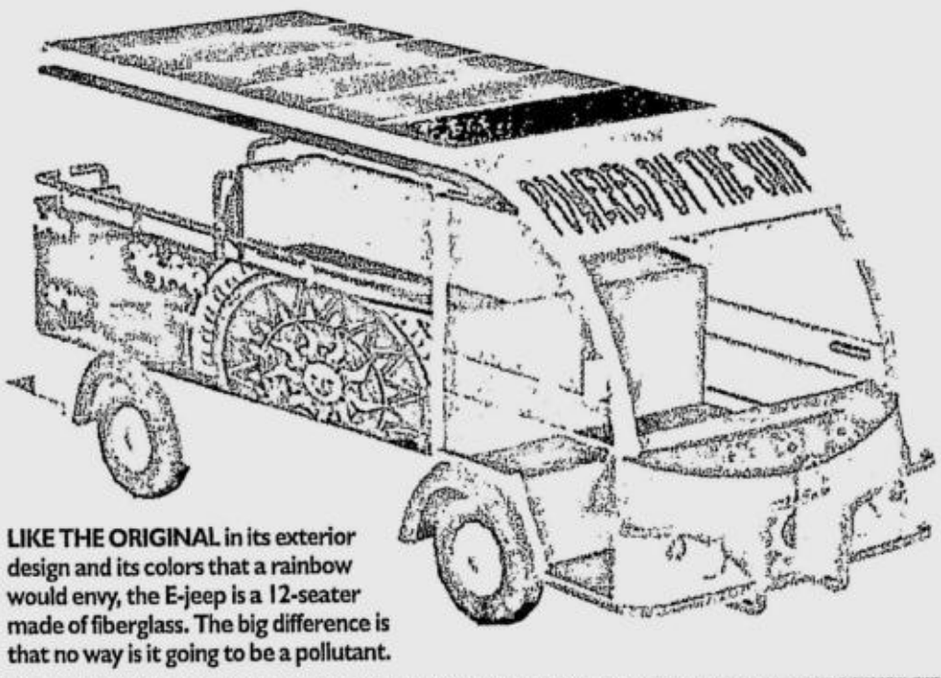
A multisectoral group is importing two electric jeepneys (E-jeeps) from China this month in an effort to introduce a low-carbon but sustainable transport system in the city.

Once the E-jeep becomes viable, more of them will be shipped to Bacolod for commercial operations. Who knows, this may be replicated in other cities across the country.

But the E-jeep is just the icing on the cake. The real magic lies in the fact that the jeep will be running on electricity produced by a renewable energy power plant from the city's market and household wastes.

Green Renewable Independent Power Producer Inc. (GRIPP) conceived of the 1-million euro (P61.88-million) project—the first in Southeast Asia—to further cement

ELECTRIC/ A8



LIKE THE ORIGINAL in its exterior design and its colors that a rainbow would envy, the E-jeep is a 12-seater made of fiberglass. The big difference is that no way is it going to be a pollutant.

Palace exec: Claudio, Puno et al. on way out

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE TWO CABINET MEMBERS who ran the administration's highly touted election machinery but failed to deliver the votes to its senatorial candidates in the May balloting could be the first casualties of President Macapagal-Arroyo's housecleaning.

Presidential Adviser Gabriel Claudio and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno should get the boot for failing to "live up to their commitment" to have six to 10 senators elected, said a top Malacañang official, who requested anonymity as he was not authorized to speak on the matter.

Palace sources said another official likely to get the boot was Efraim Genuino, chair of Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. A Pagcor source said Genuino concentrated on the campaign of his two children for councilor and mayor and both lost.

The Malacañang official confirmed this, but added that Education Secretary Jesli Lapus was also under fire for his failure to institute reforms in the Department of Education, particularly with the resur-

PALACE/ A8

SWS: 32% of Filipino adults expect quality of life to improve

ONE OF EVERY THREE FILipinos looks forward to a better quality of life, while optimism about the Philippine economy continues to improve, according to three surveys conducted by the Social Weather Stations early this year.

Still, very few Filipinos said their quality of life had improved from last year, SWS said in a statement yesterday.

SWS conducted surveys on the quality of life and economic optimism in February, March and April.

The United Nations defines quality of life to include aspects such as employment, income distribution, education, social protection, food security, health, housing, public safety, national security, environment, recreation and human rights.

"How quality of life is perceived and how much progress is achieved reflects resources and values, choices and traditions, and the complexities of the economics and politics governing societies," the United Nations said.

Asked the question, "In your opinion, what will be the quality of your life in the coming 12 months?" one in three Filipinos (between 30 and 32 percent) said that he or she expected his or her personal quality of life to improve.

Ten to 13 percent said their lives would take a turn for the worse, resulting in a net optimism of plus-17 to plus-20, the surveys showed.

Across areas, net personal optimism ranged from plus-21 to plus-22 in Metro Manila, plus-15 to plus-23 in Luzon outside Metro Manila, plus-19 in Mindanao, and plus-12 to plus-17 in the Visayas.

Personal optimism was plus-9 to plus-31 among members of Classes ABC (the middle and upper classes), plus-17 to plus-23 among members of Class D and plus-14 to plus-21 among those in Class E.

"Optimism regarding one's personal quality of life traditionally dominates," SWS said.

"Only in March 2005 (oil price

SWS: 32% OF FILIPINO/ A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/06/15/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

ESTRADA: Lest we forget

If Erap walks, that's it for us, says prosecutor

By Volt Contreras

STATE PROSECUTORS HAVE CALLED FOR oral summations during final arguments today in the six-year plunder trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

They are doing so not just to stop further delays in the case but also to "refresh the people's memory," explained Special State Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio.

Villa-Ignacio noted that oral summations were "not a common feature" of Philippine courts, but that his team believed making the proceedings public would remind Filipinos of the alleged crimes of their 13th President.

"It's been six years since we began and the people might have already forgotten the details of this case," he said in an interview.

State prosecutors plan to argue that a guilty verdict for Estrada, who is accused of amassing P4.1-billion in illegal funds, would be a rare chance for the Philippines to hold the powerful to account.

"It would show that the state, and the administration as well, have the political will to go after corrupt public officials," Villa-Ignacio said.

"If we let this go unpunished, then that's it. Forget about good governance, forget about eradicating corruption in the bureaucracy. This is the last opportunity that we as a nation have to show that we can enforce the law regardless of the personalities involved here," he said.

Prosecutors also plan to post on the Ombudsman's website their 626-page memorandum summing up the "people's case" against Estrada.

In it, they lamented the failure to obtain "a swift and timely justice" for the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies.

Estrada's conviction may provide "a second chance," they said.

The Sandiganbayan special division, created to hear the plunder case against the disgraced leader, received the prosecution's memo as well as a 276-page summation of the defense last Wednesday. The trial will close with final arguments at 9 a.m. today.

Whole-day affair

The court has required the presence of the 70-year-old Estrada in what is expected to be a whole-day affair. His co-accused son, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, is said to be in San Francisco, California, and is not expected at the hearing.

Lawyers from both camps are expected to come in full force, with the sheriff's office reserving up to 20 seats for each side. Loudspeakers are to be installed outside the 146-seat courtroom for journalists who could not be accommodated inside.

Reached at his Tanay, Rizal, vacation estate where he is under house arrest, Estrada said he will be ready to address the court himself, if allowed to do so.

"I would have been in exile and not attending if I were guilty," he said, recalling how then Justice Secretary Hernando Perez allegedly offered him safe passage to any country of his choice shortly after his ouster in January 2001.

Villa-Ignacio, who has many times accused the Estrada defense panel of delaying the case, said the prosecution has "in effect thwarted further attempts" to prolong the case.

He said that in most cases after the trial proper, the prosecution and defense would just agree to file memos and rejoinders, after which the court considers the case submitted for decision.

But if the prosecution had agreed to this route, the long wait for the verdict "might drag on until 2008."

Oral summation hearing

Sandiganbayan spokesperson Renato Bocar, who has served in the antigraft court since 1979, observed that this was the first time that the court would be holding an oral summation hearing.

Under the rules of court, the special division has to issue a verdict "within 90 days" starting today, when the case is considered submitted for decision.

Villa-Ignacio said he expected a verdict within 60 days.

"We are very confident, especially after we have presented our evidence," he said.

The Philippine National Police said it was ready to bring Estrada before the Sandiganbayan today in what will probably be his last court appearance.

Chief Supt. Romeo Hilomen, chief of the PNP's Police Security and Protection Office (PSPO), said that if Estrada refuses to appear before the court, he would be brought there by force.

"But I already talked to him and he had agreed to go," Hilomen said.

Hilomen said his office had been ordered to "produce" Estrada before the Sandiganbayan before 9 a.m.

He refused to say how many policemen would be involved or whether Estrada would be transported by chopper or by land.

"There is no specific threat to Mr. Estrada," Hilomen noted.

Hilomen's unit, with around 2,000 members, is in charge of security for very important persons (VIPs). *With Alcuin Papa and AP*

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A YOUNG relative of Marilou Ranorio joins a Migrante rally for the Filipina who is facing execution in Kuwait for murder. JOAN BONDOC

35 Pinoys languishing in Death Row

By Cynthia D. Balana

AT LEAST 35 OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORkers (OFWs) in at least five countries are facing execution for various offenses, prompting the Department of Foreign Affairs to alert its missions abroad to provide legal assistance to them, Foreign Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Esteban Conejos said yesterday.

The DFA move followed the beheading Wednesday of Filipino worker Reynaldo Cortez, 41, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia for the murder of a Pakistani taxi driver who tried to rape him in 2002.

Conejos said the DFA was saddened by the beheading of Cortez which was carried out despite repeated offers of "blood money" to the family of the Pakistani victim.

Conejos said that when he assumed office in January 2006, there were only 34 potential death penalty cases involving OFWs all over the world.

He said that through constant monitoring and legal assistance provided by the embassies abroad, 11 of these cases were commuted from death to life imprisonment.

But the number has increased to 35 because of new cases, most of which are on the trial stage, on appeal and pending before the Supreme Court of the concerned countries.

"These 35 potential death penalty cases are now being monitored by the embassies to make sure that the OFWs concerned are being given correct legal advise and enough assistance," Conejos said.

Conejos said his office had been receiving appeals for immediate assistance from the families and relatives of the 35 OFWs working in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Kuwait, China and Brunei.

He said the cases in China and Malaysia could be difficult to win because these involved illegal drugs.

"But we will exert all efforts to exonerate them or at least commute their sentence. We are strictly monitoring their cases," Conejos assured.

Coast Guard: No trace of burned ship

By Leila B. Salaverria

NO TRACE OF THE MV CATALYN-D HAS been found four days after it was razed by a fire that forced its more than 200 passengers to evacuate the vessel off Mindoro on Sunday morning, a Philippine Coast Guard official said.

PCG operations chief Rear Admiral Wilfredo Tamayo said parts of the vessel, if any could be found, could be used in the investigation of the cause of the blaze that left five people dead and several others wounded.

But Tamayo said PCG operatives have been holding search and rescue operations since Sunday, and the MV Catalyn-D has not been seen. He noted that based on witnesses' accounts, the fire that hit the wooden-hulled passenger and cargo vessel quickly spread through it.

"Since the fire spread quickly, most of the ship could just be ashes now," he said yesterday.

He also said attempts to salvage any part of the ship would be impractical, if not futile, considering that it sank 1,269 fathoms deep (7,614 feet).

Tamayo also said the PCG called off the search and rescue operation yesterday considering that it has not received any report of missing persons from the MV Catalyn-D.

The PCG kept up the search for four days just in case there were still people who needed to be rescued.

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Correction

IN THE JUNE 14 ISsue, Conrado R. Banal III's "Breaktime" column on Page B2 of the Business section—"Harass hall"—misspelled the surname of the head of the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The BIR commissioner's name is Jose Mario Buñag—not Bunyag.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer with fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Pinoy aid worker shot in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA—A FILipino member of the international aid group Mercy Corps was shot in the head in eastern Sri Lanka, a spokesperson for the group said Thursday.

The shooting took place Wednesday night in the port city of Trincomalee in the restive east, said Iveta Ouvry, Mercy Corp's director of programs and deputy country director.

The man, identified as Antonio Villeomour, was conscious and in stable condition, said Pushpa Soysa, spokesperson for Colombo's National Hospital, where the man was being treated. Soysa confirmed his nationality and said he was doing well.

Villeomour was in Trincomalee working on a post-tsunami relief project. He was shot as he strolled along the beach in front of this hotel.

Shot on the beach

"One of our international staffers was shot on the beach near the Club Oceanic hotel," Ouvry said.

Ouvry said it was too early to say whether the man was targeted or caught in crossfire, and she declined to speculate on who was behind the shooting.

The military confirmed the shooting and said police were investigating. There was no immediate comment from Tamil Tiger rebels who are fighting security forces in the east and north of the country.

The shooting comes two weeks after two Sri Lankan Red Cross volunteers were abducted from a Colombo train station and shot dead.

Mercy Corps has worked in Sri Lanka since January 2005 doing largely post-tsunami relief work. The group, which works in countries all over the world, has headquarters in the United States, Scotland and Hong Kong.

Decades of discrimination

Violence has spiked recently on the Indian Ocean island, claiming more than 5,000 lives in the past 19 months, despite a 2002 ceasefire and multiple attempts by European and Japanese envoys to persuade the government and rebels to return to peace talks.

The Tamil Tigers began fighting in 1983 for a separate homeland for Sri Lanka's 3.1 million minority Tamils in the north and east, citing decades of discrimination by successive Sinhalese-majority governments.

In August 2006, 17 local employees of the international aid group Action Against Hunger were killed as rebels and security forces battled for control of the eastern seaside town of Muttur. There have been no arrests in the case. *AP, AFP*

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GMA accepts resignation of press usec

CHANGES ARE afoot at the Office of the Press Secretary following the resignation of Press Undersecretary Isabel de Leon yesterday.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said he designated Press Assistant Secretary Jose "Jocap" Capadocia to take over the functions of De Leon who was undersecretary for media relations.

President Macapagal-Arroyo accepted the resignation of De Leon, who had served her for six years. "I will miss you," the President told De Leon when she saw her during the government-media dialogue on media killings yesterday.

Rebuilding family

De Leon cited the need to rebuild her family as the reason for her resignation. She traded her position for the chance to settle her family in the United States.

De Leon was a reporter for Manila Bulletin, covering Ms Arroyo when she was still Vice President, before Ms Arroyo asked her to work for her in June 2001, initially as presidential assistant and assistant secretary. A journalism graduate of the University of Sto. Tomas where she subsequently taught, De Leon was promoted to undersecretary on Aug. 11, 2004.

In a letter to Ms Arroyo, De Leon recalled the President's advice to her during their trip to Johannesburg on October 2000.

"While our children are young, we should devote all our time to them," she recalled Ms Arroyo as telling her.

"I devoted 15 years of my life to the Manila Bulletin as a political writer, seven years in government service under your administration. During all these years it hurts me to admit that I have been remiss in my duties as a mother to my eldest child," De Leon said.

De Leon said they would try to "rebuild our lives" in the US.

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Saan ka ba nakatira?
– Tony Meloto, Gawad Kalinga

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Ping seeks revival of Jose Pidal probe

By Dona Pazzibugan

SEN. RODOLFO BIAZON YESTERDAY PROposed the creation of an independent commission to investigate erring officers of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) during the 2004 and 2007 elections.

Biazon, who led the Senate investigation into the so-called "Hello Garci" scandal that tainted the 2004 presidential election, felt the Comelec can not conduct an impartial investigation of its own men.

Back in 2005, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos did not order an investigation of then commissioner Virgilio Garcillano and other Comelec officers implicated in the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal.

The tapes purportedly caught phone conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Garcillano during the canvassing of votes in 2004 discussing the President's margin of one million votes over the late movie star Fernando Poe Jr.

"I am supporting the call of Comelec Commissioner (Rene) Sarmiento for a prosecutorial investigation," Biazon said in a news conference yesterday at the Manila Polo Club with Genuine Opposition coalition officials and election watchdog groups.

"I think the inquiry in aid of legislation is already done. We have enough information to prosecute, to pursue legislation. Now is the time to prosecute these *bantay-salakay* (unscrupulous) officials of the Comelec," added the former military chief.

According to Biazon, had the Comelec taken action on the officers implicated in the "Hello Garci" controversy, there would have been no more questions of election fraud in the recently concluded May 14 mid-term elections.

"There's a ray of hope, since we have no less than a commissioner himself who has voiced the sentiment. So I ask civil society to support the sentiments of Rene Sarmiento," he said.

Biazon's idea is the formation of another commission like those of the Feliciano and Melo Commissions, that were both appointed by Malacañang.

The Feliciano Commission investigated the July 2003 Oakwood mutiny while the more recent Melo Commission investigated the string of extra-judicial killings blamed on the military.

But it should also include representatives of poll watchdog groups like the Catholic Church-based Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) and the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) "because they have the pieces of evidence" of election fraud, he added.

13 opposition senators to hold secret balloting

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

AT LEAST 13 OPPOSITION AND independent senators, representing the majority in the chamber, will hold a secret balloting next week to decide who among them should assume the Senate presidency in the 14th Congress.

This was revealed yesterday by Sen. Panfilo Lacson who said the opposition bloc would be united in picking a leader with no term-sharing, one who would give priority to their own when it came to committee chairmanships.

"We have a clear majority and we should not lose the opportunity and splinter into several groups only to find ourselves in the minority. We have agreed to stick together as opposition senators," Lacson said at the Kapihan sa Senado.

He said the Senate presidency was a toss-up between the incumbent Manuel Villar and Minority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr.

"We have our own preferences but we will put it to a secret balloting when we meet next week. All of us agreed to respect the results of the balloting," Lacson said.

Bad feelings

He, however, admitted the secret balloting was meant to preempt any "bad feelings" that might arise from the contest for the Senate presidency.

To keep their commitments binding, Lacson said the group agreed "not to talk" to any senator who breaks his word for the next three to six years to keep the members of the bloc from changing their minds when the formal voting begins on the Senate floor.

Lacson said the opposition bloc had agreed to be united at least up to October or December this year.

"After the opening [of Congress on July 23], we have to continue to talk to keep the bloc united. We all know that the longer we stick together, the better it would be for the opposition," he said.

"By the way, Nene and Villar are not bound by this agreement because they were not present in the caucuses," he said.

No term sharing

Lacson said the group had also rejected a term-sharing between the candidates because "it would be a sign of weakness and compromise."

The opposition bloc has met four times and its ranks are expected to swell as the opening of Congress nears.

The bloc will initially be made up of the eight winning candidates of the Genuine Opposition (assuming Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III is proclaimed) and three original opposition senators—Jinggoy Estrada, Jamby Madrigal and the elder Pimentel.

Lacson said he expected Senators Mar Roxas and Rodolfo Biazon to participate in the secret balloting and the list could grow if they get the nod of winning independent candidates Gregorio Honasan and Francis Pangilinan.

Lacson said the opposition was also planning a third "expansion" that could bring administration senators to their side, especially the ones who were "vulnerable to being poached."

Aside from no side deals with Malacañang and its allies in the Senate, he said the opposition group also voted to give priority to their members in the assignment of committee chairmanships, with the remaining committees left to the administration.

"All of us submitted three committees each—one priority and the rest second choices—that we would want to head. As an opposition-dominated Senate, it is but right that we be given first crack at the committees of our choice," he said.

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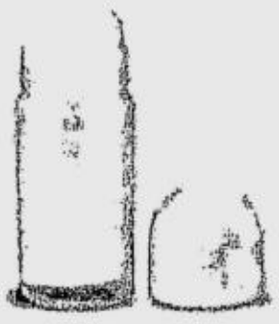

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MAGUINDANAO POLLS

2 witnesses to fraud abducted in Cebu

By Charlie Señase, Edwin Fernandez and Aquiles Zonio
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—TWO PUBLIC school teachers from Maguindanao who were on their way to Manila to testify on election fraud in the province were abducted by unidentified armed men while they were in Cebu City, a coordinator for the opposition in Mindanao said yesterday.

Ruel de la Torre of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) in Zamboanga del Sur said he was escorting Fatima Salimbang and Bantilan Sindatuk, who had served as election inspectors in South Upi, Maguindanao, to Manila when the two were seized by six men as their ship docked in Cebu early this week.

"Up to now, we have no information on their whereabouts," De la Torre said.

He said he reported the incident to the Cebu police before returning to Pagadian City, where he is based.

Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, police chief of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) of which Maguindanao is a part, said they were investigating De la Torre's claim.

But a check with the school district supervisor's office in South Upi showed there had been no report of missing teachers. Education officials in the town denied two teachers by the names of Fatima Salimbang and Bantilan Sindatuk worked there.

De la Torre said three South Upi teachers had agreed to go with him to Manila to testify on the alleged fraud before the Comelec.

"But one of them returned home after family members complained of death threats," he said.

De la Torre said he and the two other teachers took a boat to Manila after the money promised by two opposition senators for their plane fare was delayed.

Charges of fraud tainted the polls in Maguindanao after Team Unity's 12 senatorial candidates swept the elections in the province and some teachers, who served as poll inspectors, claimed no elections took place but that armed men filled out the ballots in favor of the administration slate.

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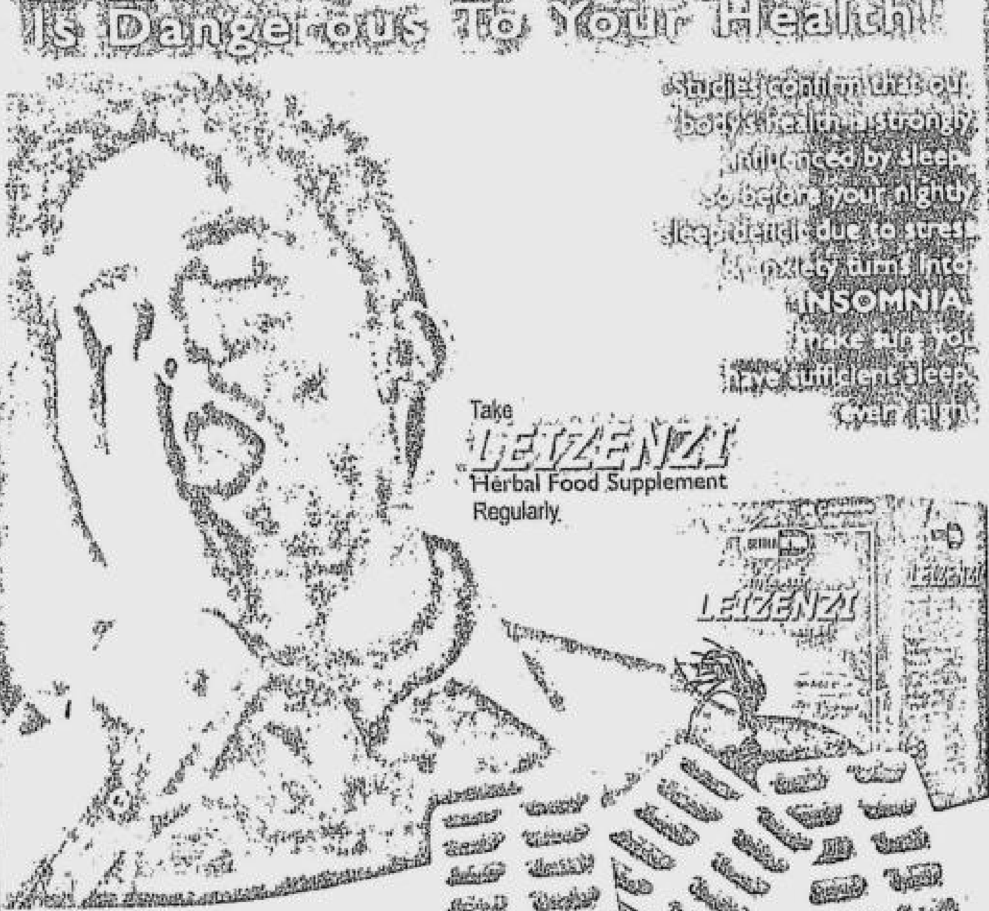

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Labor chief urges ILO to reject KMU complaint

By Jerome Aning

BRION

LABOR SECRETARY ARTURO BRION on Wednesday asked the International Labor Organization to dismiss the complaints filed against the government by the militant labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno for the killing of unionists and labor rights violations.

Speaking before the 96th International Labor Conference hosted by the ILO in Geneva, Switzerland, Brion described the cases as "premature referrals by complainants who had not exhausted their remedies in the local forum and who were simply engaged in forum shopping and other sinister designs."

The ILO convention is the latest international forum at which the Arroyo administration has been forced to defend itself against accusations of perpetrating and tolerating extrajudicial killings and human rights violations.

The complaints, filed by KMU in October last year, are being heard by the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association chaired by the Netherlands. The committee has asked the Philippine government to reply to the allegations.

Brion said the government could only hope that the committee would be "very discerning in giving due course to the complaints and appreciating the explanations given."

He said that by going to the ILO and refusing to cooperate with Philippine authorities, the complainants were "giving rise to the suspicion that they simply wanted to use the committee as a press forum and were not after actual remedies."

Brion said he hoped the "perceived problems and deficiencies" of the Philippines shall be evaluated by the committee "in the context of a country's unique circumstances, degree of development, history and track record."

"As a rule, faithful members of the ILO need assistance and encouragement, not condemnation, if indeed there are deficiencies," he told the delegates.

In its complaint, the KMU blamed the Arroyo administration for the killing of 64 trade unionists since 2001 and a slew of labor rights violations such as the abduction, illegal arrest, and military and police harassment of workers and labor rights groups.

All these violated ILO Conventions 87 and 98 on freedom of association and the right to organize, and collective bargaining, which the Philippines ratified in 1953, the KMU said.

"If these are not stopped, it will dramatically weaken the country's trade union movement," the KMU said in its complaint.

The KMU cited the results of investigations conducted by local and international groups such as the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights and the International Labor Solidarity Movement.

Most of those killed were members of the KMU and its affiliates. Prominent among them were the seven workers at Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac, which is owned by the Cojuangco family of which former President Corazon Aquino is a part, who were killed during a strike dispersal by the military on Nov. 16, 2004, the KMU said.

The militant labor group also said there had been 22 cases of abduction and forced disappearances victimizing 52 unionists and union supporters between Jan. 20, 2001 and June 30, 2006.

The Arroyo administration, the KMU charged, was implementing a cheap and docile labor policy to attract foreign investments at the expense of workers.

"We believe this is part of a deliberate policy of the Arroyo [administration] to prevent the workers from asserting their rights and fight for better wages and working conditions. We hope that through international pressure we can stop the violations of workers' and human rights and expose [Ms] Arroyo's false and fake human rights concerns," the KMU said.

The group said the ILO should send a fact-finding team to the Philippines to look into its complaints.

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RP trains bodyguards for Asean meet

By Alcuin Papa

AROUND 300 POLICE BODYguards will be deployed for the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) ministerial meeting in July.

Chief Superintendent Romeo Hilomen, chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Police Security and Protection Office (PSPO) unit, said most of his men will guard foreign ministers and their spouses.

"The foreign ministers and their spouses will be guarded by close-in security 24 hours seven days a week," Hilomen said.

Director Wilfredo Garcia, chief of the PNP's Directorate for Operations, said he expects around 40 ministers to arrive in the country for the summit. Usually, three police bodyguards are assigned to every VIP.

Garcia added that the security setup for the conferences will mirror those undertaken for the 12th Asean Summit held in Cebu City last January.

The 40th Asean Ministerial Meeting, a continuation of the Asean Summit, the Post Ministerial Conferences and the 14th Asean Regional Forum will held in the country from July 6 to Aug. 2.

The conferences will be held at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) in Pasay City while a separate program is being prepared for the delegates' spouses in Intramuros, Tagaytay City and Makati City.

Also included in the conferences are observers Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, the US Secretary General and the UN Secretary General.

The PNP, in coordination with other security agencies, will provide security coverage for guests, civil disturbance management and other related activities to make sure the event goes on smoothly.

PNP Chief Director General Oscar Calderon said in a statement that terrorists groups may take advantage and disrupt the event.

"We must ensure the safety of this event because anything that will endanger the lives of the delegates would be detrimental to the national and bilateral interest of the country the participating Asean and observer countries," Calderon said.

The PNP also ordered the creation of "Task Force AMM" under Deputy Director General Avelino Razon.

Razon, according to Calderon, will "orchestrate, direct and supervise the overall conduct of security operations in all areas of engagements including hotels where the delegates will be billeted."

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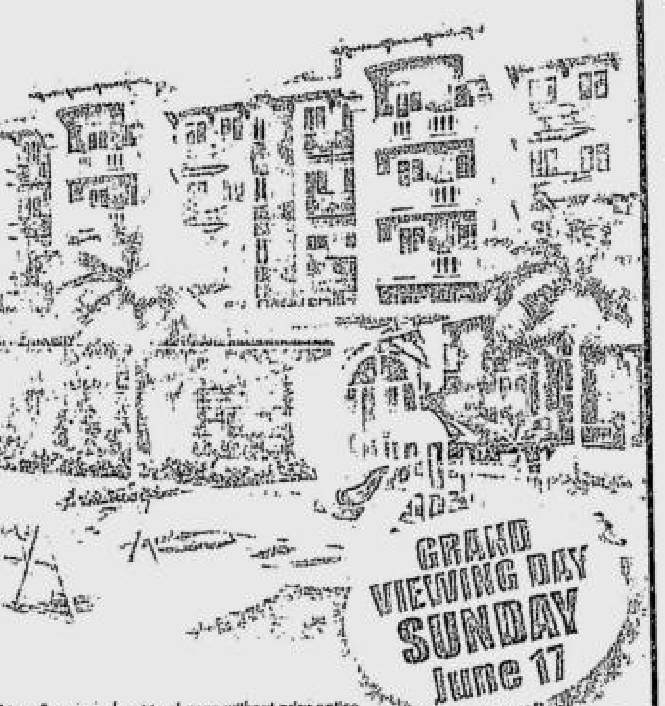

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Ex-Customs chief appeals CA verdict in civil suit

By Leila B. Salaverria

FORMER BUREAU OF CUSTOMS COMMISsioner Titus Villanueva has asked the Court of Appeals to reverse its decision ordering him to pay P800,000 in damages to a customs official for allegedly refusing to recognize her position in the bureau, which was at the time being disputed.

In a civil suit, Villanueva was accused by Emma Rosqueta of allowing another person other than herself to assume the post of deputy commissioner for revenue collection and monitoring in 2001 and of humiliating her by dropping her picture from the BOC's anniversary souvenir program and a billboard announcing the event.

In his motion for reconsideration, Villanueva said he did not violate a Regional Trial Court's injunction when he permitted Gil Valera to take over the post that Rosqueta was vying for.

He also said the RTC judge in Manila later dissolved the writ of injunction. He noted that he should have been cited for contempt if he had defied the court's injunction, but in fact was not.

Villanueva also said he did not humiliate Rosqueta when her picture was omitted from the BOC's souvenir program.

He pointed out that both Rosqueta and Valera's pictures were not included in the program because of the dispute over the position.

He further said it was not his decision, but that of a steering committee, to omit their pictures.

"All told, there is no factual and legal basis for this Honorable Court to find defendant-appellee liable for moral and exemplary damages and attorney's fees," he said.

In its decision, the appellate court said Villanueva should pay damages to Rosqueta for the anguish that his actions caused her.

It said there was ill will behind Villanueva's actions causing Rosqueta to suffer sleepless nights and serious anxiety.

PNP doctor who killed superior officer dismissed

A POLICE DOCTOR who shot and killed his superior and injured several others inside Camp Crame last November has been dismissed by the Philippine National Police (PNP).

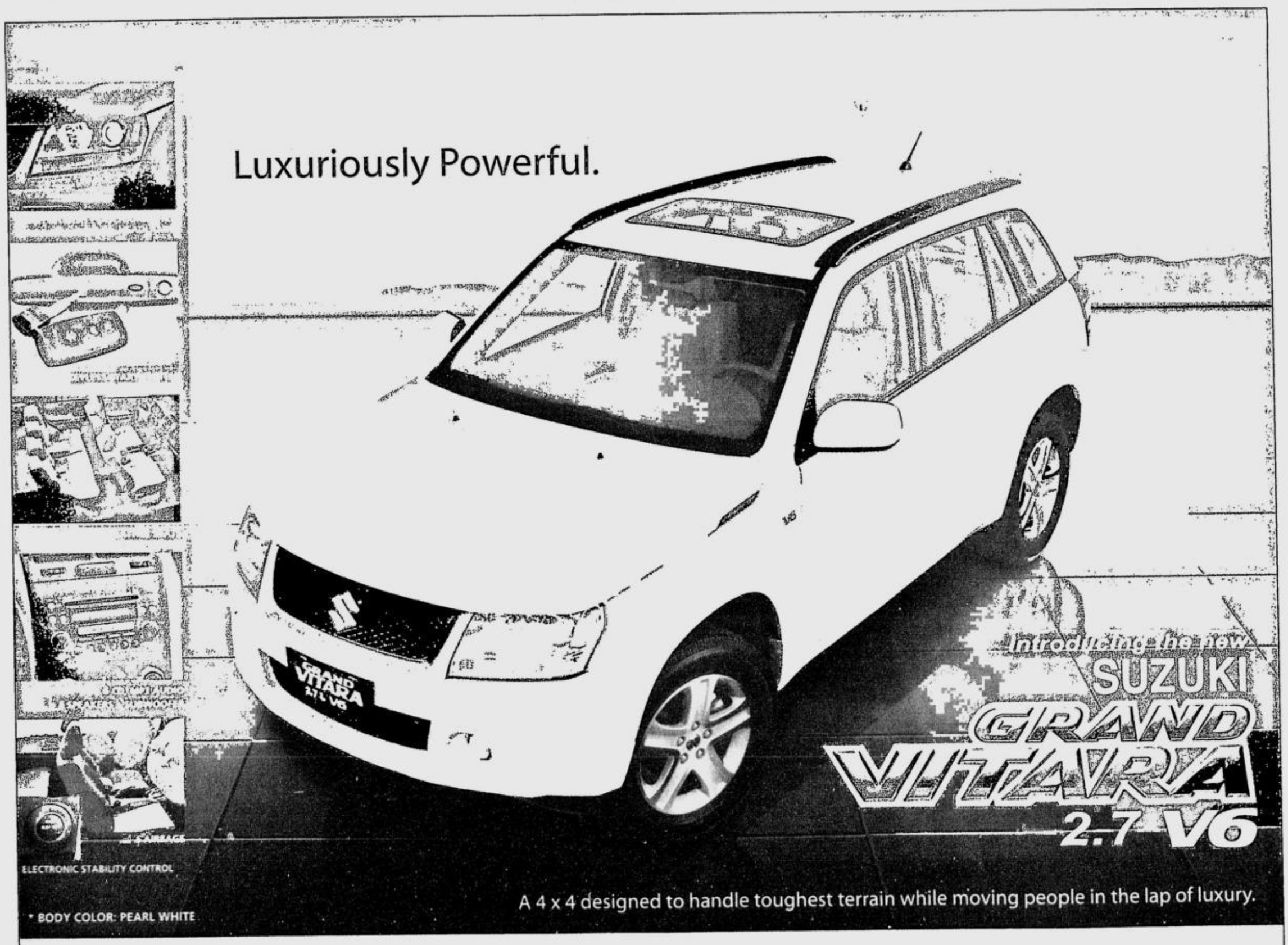
The dismissal of Chief Insp. Renato Poscalbo has been approved by PNP Chief Director General Oscar Calderon, according to Director Geary Barias, Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management chief.

Poscalbo was a member of the PNP Health Service.

Barias said the Summary Hearing Officer investigating the six administrative complaints filed against Poscalbo found him guilty of grave misconduct, a charge punishable by dismissal from the police force. All Poscalbo's benefits have also been forfeited.

The dismissal of Poscalbo will not affect the criminal cases of murder and frustrated murder filed against the suspect.

In the late hours of Nov. 29, 2006, Poscalbo entered the PNP Multi-Purpose Hall and fired at his superior Chief Superintendent Federico Damatac, killing him instantly. The PNP Health Service was celebrating its anniversary.



Palace exec: Claudio, Puno et al. ...

From page A1

gence of error-filled textbooks.

The official told the INQUIRER that Puno, as head of the local government department, and Claudio, as the President's top political adviser, were given a "free hand to set up the much-vaunted election machinery, but did not deliver."

He said "billions of pesos" were spent during the campaign of the administration's Team Unity (TU) but only two senatorial candidates ended up in the winning circle of 12. "This explains why President Arroyo is angry, and so she decides to revamp the whole Cabinet," the official said.

Don't blame Ermita

"Why should Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita be blamed for their failures?" said the official, referring to an earlier report that Ermita would be sacked. Ermita was not given a "prominent role" in the 90-day national campaign since he was busy with his son Edwin's vice gubernatorial candidacy in Batangas.

"He was left in the Palace doing administrative things," said the official. Puno and Claudio were "out in the field, supposedly ensuring Team Unity's victory," the source said.

For his part, presidential legal adviser Sergio Apostol said he had yet to see a copy of the presidential directive asking all Cabinet members to resign. Apostol, however, said it was "unfair" of some quarters to pin the blame on Ermita for the TU's poor showing in the senatorial elections.

Apostol said it would be wise for the President to revamp her official family, including the "chairmen, presidents and members of the board" of 117 GOCCs and GFIs—corporations and financial institutions owned or controlled by the government.

"Revamp, we need that. The President should periodically make a revamp of the Cabinet and the GOCCs because their performances should be evaluated," the INQUIRER source also said.

During his regular press briefing on Wednesday, Ermita said Ms Arroyo had asked Cabinet members and heads of GOCCs and GFIs to tender their resignations.

Malacañang, which had reportedly ordered the DepEd to cancel the result of the bidding for the latest textbook project worth P1.3 billion, had left it up to Lapus to deal with the "problem," but warned him against unnecessarily dragging the President into the mess.

He said the "bottom line" was: "We must improve the wellbeing of our people. So she will do everything to improve the conditions of our people."

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes and Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman expressed surprise over the reported Cabinet revamp. The two said they were neither asked by the President to quit nor were they aware of any coming revamp.

'We just do our job'

"I was surprised when I read it in the papers," said Pangandaman, who met with Ms Arroyo at a Cabinet meeting in Malacañang on Tuesday on extending the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, which is expiring in one year.

Both Reyes and Pangandaman, however, said they would submit their resignations if asked by the President.

"No problem. We all serve at the pleasure of the President," Reyes, who assumed the top post at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in February last year, said in an ambush interview.

"If the President feels that there should be a revamp, that's her option. We just do our job. If she asks us to tender our resignation, we will follow," Pangandaman, who was named to the post in an acting capacity in July 2005, said.

No political reason

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles Jr., said there appeared to be no political reason for Ms Arroyo's move. "All Presidents usually revamp their official family during the last years of their terms," he told the INQUIRER.

"It's a presidential prerogative and may have nothing to do with the election results. I do not see any direct connection," Nograles added.

"It's appalling and unfair that skeptics are seeing nothing but political motives in the resign order when its real intent is to address everyone's concern that the government further improve in public service," Bohol Rep. Eladio Jala said.

Outgoing Davao del Sur Rep. Douglas Cagas said it was time the President revamped her Cabinet to improve the executive's performance and ensure the fulfillment of her agenda in the last three years of her term. *With reports from TJ Burgonio and Norman Bordadora*

GMA to media: Gov't to end killings, libel suits

From page A1

take up their recommendation to form a special prosecution team to handle media killings.

She also agreed to update a 1990 agreement under which police serving warrants of arrest for journalists facing libel charges would first notify the National Press Club and the media organization concerned.

The President, who had not been accessible to the media, offered to meet with journalists every three months.

Mike A's libel cases

Ms Arroyo's husband had filed a slew of libel suits against more than 40 journalists for reports linking him to smuggling and other scandals. After getting a second lease on life after highly risky open heart surgery in April, Jose Miguel Arroyo announced he had asked his lawyers to drop all the libel cases. *(See related story in Metro, Page A25.)*

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, which has been critical of the Arroyo administration, was not invited to the Malacañang gathering.

The President said she called the meeting to "review our efforts to prosecute and prevent journalist killings."

"First of all, let me once again deplore the killings of journalists. We have a sorry history in our nation for political violence. We aim to break this cycle of violence once and for all," Ms Arroyo said in the dialogue held at the Aguinaldo State Dining Room.

"I happen to believe that 99 percent of military and policemen and women are good, outstanding and loyal patriots fighting to protect our country everyday. But if rogue members of police and military are involved we've all agreed that they shall be punished," she said.

The President reiterated the steps she had taken to address the killings, including the creation of a commission headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo.

"We're in the process of following his recommendations. This includes special courts, stronger witness protection measures, more money for prosecutors, and investigations of Left and Right (elements) to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice," she said.

Stop all violence

"As we have made tough choices to turn around our economy, we will also get a handle on these killings to end them once and for all. Today, let us join hands in mutual trust and common purpose so that all the violence will be stopped," Ms Arroyo said.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye denied the dialogue had something to do with the arrival on June 18 for a 10-day visit of six human rights experts from the European Union to look into the government's efforts to stop the killings of journalists and militants.

Fifty-one journalists have been killed since Ms Arroyo became president in 2001. Human rights groups say more than 800 militants have been killed since 2001 in extrajudicial executions (the INQUIRER count is 296).

EU Ambassador Alistair MacDonald told reporters in a separate briefing the visit was a response to a Philippine request for assistance in the establishment of special courts, training of judges and prosecutors, strengthening the witness protection program and improving forensic skills.

Brainstorming

Ms Arroyo, who left in the middle of the dialogue so that the participants would be "candid" with each other, had her security officials face the media in a "brainstorming" and asked them to come up with a consensus on steps to be taken to address the killings.

The officials included Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Bunye, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Philippine Information Agency Director General Dodi Limcaoco, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon, Task Force Usig chief Gerry Barias and Interior Undersecretary Melchor Rosales.

The different media organizations were represented by Kapisanan ng mga Broadkaster ng Pilipinas president Butch Canoy and chair Jun Nicdao, National Press Club president Roy Mabasa and director Sammy Julian, Manila Overseas Press Club president Tony Lopez and Emil Jurado, Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines president Manny Mogato and vice president Burd Wang, Malacañang Press Corps president Paolo Romero and vice president Mia Gonzales, Defense Press Corps president Verlin Ruiz and vice president Jay Ruiz, and Philippine National Police Press Corps president Nilo Marasigan. *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

Electric jeeps coming; first in Southeast Asia

From page A1

Negros Occidental's move to go for clean energy five years ago.

GRIPP is the same network of civil society groups, business sector, local government units and green groups that led Negros' campaign to foil the construction of coal plants in the province and stay clean.

Logical choice

The province gets its power mainly from geothermal energy. That's why Bacolod is the most logical choice for the pilot-testing.

"The concept grew out of a desire to complete the clean energy campaign for Negros. We thought it fitting to complete that by adding a transport component," Athena Ronquillo-Ballesteros, founding member of GRIPP, said.

The idea, eventually, is to have a fleet of 50 E-jeeps plying the secondary routes, or those streets not covered by the 3,000 to 3,500 locally made jeepneys.

After getting 300,000 euros (P18.56 million) for the entire fleet from the Dutch institution Doen, GRIPP ordered two E-jeeps worth 6,000 euros (P371,280) each from Langqing Electric Vehicle Co. Ltd. in Guangzhou.

It plans to run six E-jeeps for the initial tests from three to six months beginning July. Once it has a clear idea how well the operation runs, GRIPP will go into full commercial operations by July next year.

"Our dream is that in three to five years, they can increase the fleet from six to 50, and eventually, 100, so we can break 10 percent of the market," said Ballesteros, also Greenpeace climate and energy campaigner. Greenpeace is part of GRIPP.

Doen is actually a partner in the project.

"The more commercially viable or successful the project is, the more the [Dutch group] will support it. In fact, [Doen] is even willing to support the replication of the project in other cities," Ballesteros said.

Batteries, colorful designs

Unlike the metallic jeeps that rule urban cities' roads, the E-jeeps are made of fiberglass, and can seat only 12, excluding the driver. They will carry batteries that will be charged for eight hours daily to give them power to cover 80 to 100 km.

But like the iconic jeepneys, they'll be carrying colorful designs on their bodies.

As currently practiced, GRIPP will ask its drivers to remit a portion of their daily earnings as part of the "boundary," the fixed amount that drivers remit to the jeepney owners out of their earnings at day's end.

GRIPP will use the money to fund its own operations.

With no fuel and maintenance costs, drivers of E-jeeps are expected to bring home bigger incomes each day.

A jeepney driver earns an average of P1,856 daily. But after paying for the gas, and remitting the "boundary" to the operator, he ends up with a take-home pay of P247.52 a day.

"If the [E-jeep] driver remits a boundary of P804 to P990 a day to the foundation, and takes home the rest, then his earnings will be four times what he's earning now. And he's not that exhausted," Ballesteros said.

The E-jeep drivers will charge the standard fare approved by land transportation officials.

Power plant

Beyond the E-jeep, the more crucial component of the project is the setting up of a power plant consisting of a generator, a high solid anaerobic digester, and gas engine on a piece of land to be provided by the city government.

Here, organic wastes collected by the city's garbage trucks from restaurants and wet markets will be emptied into digesters, where they will be "solubilized" and converted into gas. The gas, in turn, will be fed into a gas engine that will produce the electricity.

"When we thought of the project it's no secret we had the environment in mind. Climate change, and solving air pollution are two of our primary concerns," Ballesteros said.

"With this project, you can reduce both. If you have better, cleaner air for a city like Bacolod, you also reduce the waste and you have more savings in the city," she said.

Savings which, Ballesteros said, could otherwise fund the city's other priorities, such as infrastructure, education and governance.

GRIPP hopes to enter into a joint venture with another partner to set up and operate the power plant.

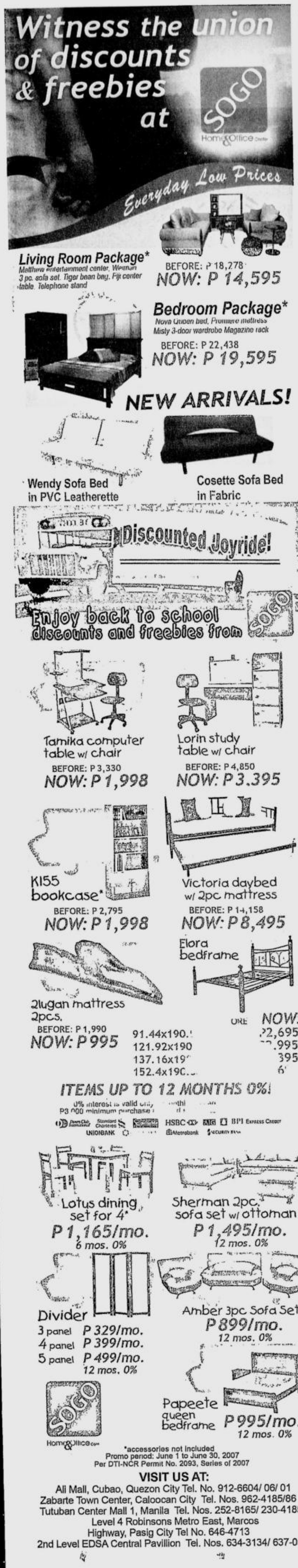
Charging station

Eventually, it has to establish a depot that will serve as a charging station and maintenance center, the project's third component. But this can come later.

Meantime, the jeepneys' batteries will be charged at a local utility. GRIPP wouldn't mind if a city government copies the concept, or the manufacturer of the local jeepneys makes its own E-jeep.

"Our hope is to replicate it in other cities in the Philippines and in the rest of Asia," Ballesteros said. "The goal here is to show that it works in a place like Bacolod."

Noel Santos Digan, PT, DPT has successfully completed his postprofessional doctorate in physical therapy from Boston University Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences. After completion of his professional education, he was promoted to the Manager of Rehabilitation Services for Beth Abraham Comprehensive Care Management (CCM) in the Upper Manhattan region. Prior to his promotion, he was the Senior Physical Therapist for the same organization for almost 5 years. CCM is a not-for-profit health care organization providing a full range of continuing services to the frail and elderly in the New York metropolitan area. His doctorate was partly funded by 1199 SEIU New York Division and the financial and moral support of his sister, The Rev. Nizzi Santos Digan who is also an alumnus of Boston University (Master of Divinity 2002). He completed his bachelor's degree in physical therapy from Emilio Aguinaldo College in Manila in 1992; his secondary education from the University of Santo Tomas Education High School in Manila in 1984; his elementary education from Angono Elementary School in Angono, Rizal in 1980. He currently resides in New York City. He can be reached at NDigan@bethabe.org.



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Johnsons Pure Essentials Bath Soap Fresh (90g) — ₱16.50 per pc.

Johnsons Pure Essentials Bath Soap Fresh (135g) — ₱25.20 per pc.

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Maling Premium Pork Luncheon Meat (340g) — ₱33 per pc.

Bonakid Pre- School Milk Powder (400g) — ₱132 per pc.

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Nido 1+ Milk Powder Vanilla (900g) — ₱360.50 per pc.

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Wilkins Distilled (1.5Liters) — ₱29 per pc.

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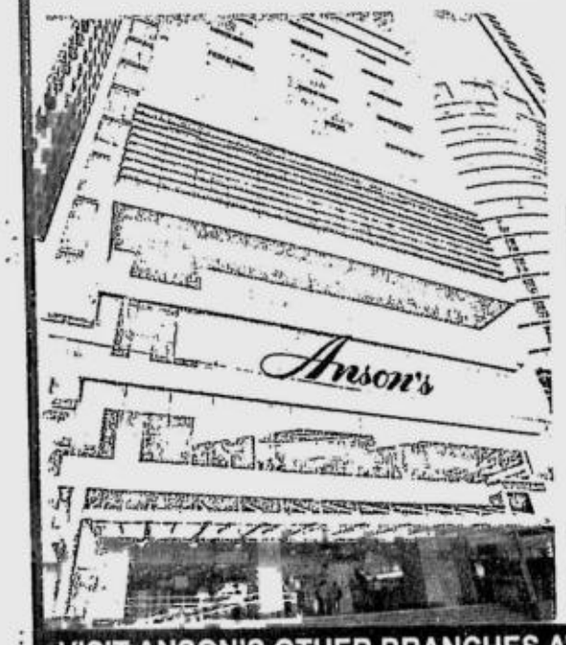

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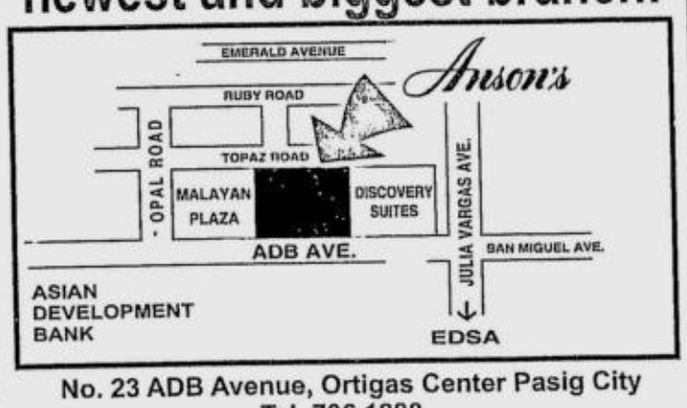

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THE NEW ILOILO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT: Inaugurated by President Arroyo on Wednesday, the new airport is in Sta. Barbara-Cabatuan in Mandurriao district, 20 km north of Iloilo City.
ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Old Iloilo airport sees last of happy landings

From page A1

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The growing passenger traffic and the limited facilities at the Mandurriao airport were among the reasons a new airport had to be built.

Being Iloilo's gateway to the rest of the country, it received and sent off presidents, a Pope, dignitaries and beauty queens. It also has a place in the nation's history.

History

Historian Rex Salvilla wrote that the late Lt. Col. Carlos P. Romulo, who later became a brigadier general and president of the United Nations General Assembly, landed at the Mandurriao airfield on his way to Australia during World War II.

On Gen. Douglas McArthur's orders, Romulo took off from Cabcaben airstrip under heavy Japanese bombardment aboard a US Navy J2F4 patrol plane just after midnight on April 9, 1942. It reached Iloilo airport at dawn.

Voice of Freedom

Salvilla said that while taking their breakfast at the airport restaurant, Romulo and his pilot, US Air Force Lt. Roland Barnick, unashamedly wept upon hearing the fall of Bataan broadcast over the "Voice of Freedom."

Romulo flew to Mindanao the following day on another plane.

In December 1944, the Iloilo airfield came under heavy bombardment from B-24s of the American forces.

For sale

The 54-hectare property where the old airport stands will be sold through public bidding.

A bidding took place early in May but the Department of Finance declared it a failure because the price offered was below the P1.2 billion set by the government.

The bidders were SM Prime Holdings, Empire East Land Holdings and Robinson's Land Corp.

Ms Arroyo lauds Tupas, Drilon

In Cabatuan, Iloilo, President Macapagal-Arroyo lauded on Wednesday a political adversary for his role in the construction of the new 188-hectare airport.

During the airport's inauguration rites, the President credited Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Sr. with the realization of the new Iloilo International Airport.

"Governor Tupas, congratulations. If (former) Gov. (Arthur) Defensor conceived of the airport, you gave birth to this airport," Ms Arroyo said.

Before the President spoke, Tupas acknowledged Drilon's contribution to make the P8.76-billion airport a reality.

"The chief of architect of this project, Sen. Franklin Drilon, could not join us in this glorious moment but we also convey to him our heartfelt thanks for daring to dream big dreams for Iloilo," he said.

The governor also expressed his gratitude to the President.

Ms Arroyo recognized Drilon for helping the government increase its revenue when he was Senate President.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas, president of the League of Cities of the Philippines and one of Ms Arroyo's staunchest allies, said the President's words "clearly showed that she is extending her hand in friendship for the sake of economic development."

"Her message was clear: Let us forget about politics because the elections are over. Let us focus on real agenda which is to push for economic development," said Treñas.

Asked to comment on the President's acknowledgment of Drilon and Tupas, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said, "So what?!"

"Do you expect her to talk about the anomalies (committed by Tupas)?" said Gonzalez, a former Iloilo City congressman.

He said the President merely acknowledged all the people who contributed to the construction of the airport.

Contentious parties together

Ms Arroyo maintained that politics was not hampering the country's economic performance.

"The path we have set for economic reforms has not been upset by partisan elections. And if you want proof of that statement, just look at the ones who are on this platform today. From different contending parties in the last elections, we are all together for the future of Iloilo and Panay Island," she said.

Tupas was seated beside Ms Arroyo at the pre-departure area where the program was held. Also present were the President's allies—Iloilo Representatives Judy Syjuco and Defensor, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and Gonzalez.

"Now that the election is over, let us now all focus [our efforts] so that our economy will further grow," the President said in Hiligaynon.

Ex-allies

Drilon and Tupas were the President's allies until July 2005 when they broke ties with her administration and called for her resignation.

Tupas has blamed the administration for the Jan. 17 assault on the Iloilo provincial capitol. Heavily armed policemen had tried to enforce a dismissal order by the Ombudsman against the governor and two provincial board members for graft.

Tupas defeated the administration candidate, Vice Gov. Roberto Armada, by a margin of 208,000 votes.

SWS: 32% of Filipino adults expect quality of life to improve

From page A1

increases), March 2003 (the Iraq war), September/October 2000 ("juetenggate"), and early 1984 (post-Aquino assassination) did pessimism dominate," it said.

Net optimism about the country's economy was plus-6 in April, when 25 percent said they thought the economy would be better in the next 12 months.

Net optimism about the economy was minus-23 in March last year. The figure has been steadily improving since. It was minus-9 last September, minus-2 in November and plus-1 in February this year.

"Compared to the third and fourth quarters of 2006, net economic optimism scores in early 2007 improved in all areas," SWS said.

Among members of Classes ABC, net optimism ranged from minus-8 to plus-8, while it was between minus-4 and plus-7 in Class D, and between minus-1 and plus-2 in Class E.

Losers outnumber gainers

Asked to compare their quality of life in early 2007 to how it was a year ago, Filipinos who said their lives were "worse now" (losers) outnumbered those who claimed their lives had improved (gainers).

Thirty-five percent to 43 percent of respondents said their lives were worse than 12 months ago, while only 18 to 21 percent said their lives had improved.

Leo Laroza, SWS manager for publications, said the term "quality of life" ("*uri ng pamumuhay*") was defined by the respondents themselves.

Face-to-face interviews

The pre-election surveys were conducted on March 15-18 and April 14-17, using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 registered voters.

The SWS first quarter survey was conducted on Feb. 24-27, using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults.

Samples for the surveys were divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

The surveys had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

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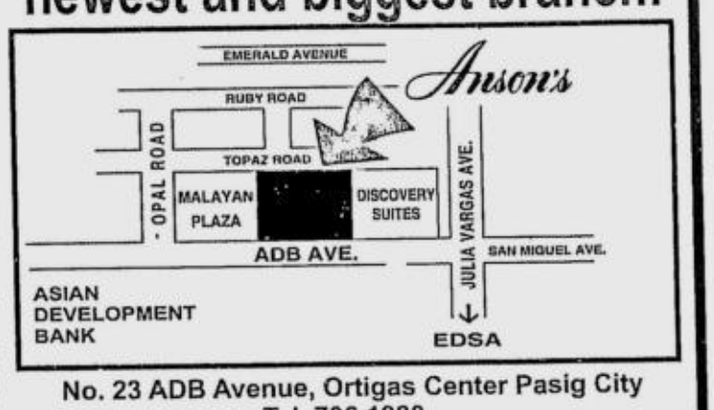

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"The path we have set for economic reforms has not been upset by partisan elections. And if you want proof of that statement, just look at the ones who are on this platform today. From different contending parties in the last elections, we are all together for the future of Iloilo and Panay Island," she said.

Tupas was seated beside Ms Arroyo at the pre-departure area where the program was held. Also present were the President's allies—Iloilo Representatives Judy Syjuco and Defensor, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and Gonzalez.

"Now that the election is over, let us now all focus [our efforts] so that our economy will further grow," the President said in Hiligaynon.

Ex-allies

Drilon and Tupas were the President's allies until July 2005 when they broke ties with her administration and called for her resignation.

Tupas has blamed the administration for the Jan. 17 assault on the Iloilo provincial capitol. Heavily armed policemen had tried to enforce a dismissal order by the Ombudsman against the governor and two provincial board members for graft.

Tupas defeated the administration candidate, Vice Gov. Roberto Armada, by a margin of 208,000 votes.

SWS: 32% of Filipino adults expect quality of life to improve

From page A1

increases), March 2003 (the Iraq war), September/October 2000 ("juetenggate"), and early 1984 (post-Aquino assassination) did pessimism dominate," it said.

Net optimism about the country's economy was plus-6 in April, when 25 percent said they thought the economy would be better in the next 12 months.

Net optimism about the economy was minus-23 in March last year. The figure has been steadily improving since. It was minus-9 last September, minus-2 in November and plus-1 in February this year.

"Compared to the third and fourth quarters of 2006, net economic optimism scores in early 2007 improved in all areas," SWS said.

Among members of Classes ABC, net optimism ranged from minus-8 to plus-8, while it was between minus-4 and plus-7 in Class D, and between minus-1 and plus-2 in Class E.

Losers outnumber gainers

Asked to compare their quality of life in early 2007 to how it was a year ago, Filipinos who said their lives were "worse now" (losers) outnumbered those who claimed their lives had improved (gainers).

Thirty-five percent to 43 percent of respondents said their lives were worse than 12 months ago, while only 18 to 21 percent said their lives had improved.

Leo Laroza, SWS manager for publications, said the term "quality of life" ("*uri ng pamumuhay*") was defined by the respondents themselves.

Face-to-face interviews

The pre-election surveys were conducted on March 15-18 and April 14-17, using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 registered voters.

The SWS first quarter survey was conducted on Feb. 24-27, using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults.

Samples for the surveys were divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

The surveys had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

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Kidnapped priest believed held in Zambo mountains

THE MILITARY HAS PINPOINTED the general location of kidnapped Italian priest Father Giancarlo Bossi, a senior general said yesterday.

Bossi's kidnappers are believed to have moved him to the mountainous Mamagun district in Naga in Zamboanga Sibugay province, said Maj. Gen. Ben Mohammad Dolorfino.

He said the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which is in the last stage of peace negotiations with the government, had relayed the information to the government.

The priest is believed to be held by a 15-man group which has been receiving supplies from local supporters, said Dolorfino.

"What is important is to be able to contain the kidnappers in one area so we can limit their options. Once we contain them they will have only two possible options: To escape and probably leave the victim behind or to negotiate," he said.

Bossi, of the Pontifical Institute of Foreign Missions was snatched by armed men believed to be renegade members of the MILF near his parish church in the coastal village of Payao on Zamboanga Sibugay last Sunday.

Self-styled MILF commander Abdusalam Akiddin, also known as Commander Kiddie, has been identified as the likely suspect. He has reportedly denied involvement in the abduction.

Most likely suspect

Dolorfino however said Akiddin was still the most likely suspect, citing his history of kidnapping foreigners for ransom in the south.

Bossi, a tall and powerfully built 57-year-old missionary, has been in the Philippines since 1980 and had worked in the area for the past decade.

Dolorfino said Akiddin was behind nine kidnap for ransom cases since 1998–for which he is believed to collected ransom.

Three of Akiddin"s past kidnap victims were foreigners—two Belgian engineers kidnapped in June 1999 and October 2001 and another Italian priest, Guisseppe Piarantoni, kidnapped in June 2005.

"He is facing many arrest warrants for kidnapping," Dolorfino said.

The Akiddin group is known to bring their kidnap victims to the Naga area, he said.

He said Bossi's kidnappers have not made any ransom demand because they are on the run.

"They have no chance to communicate their demands," he said.

Dolorfino said he was optimistic that the Bossi case would be resolved soon because the MILF was helping.

He said the MILF sent its highest ranking member in its armed force, Mohammad Nassim, to help the government.

He did not discount the possibility that the MILF was trying to establish contact with the Akkidin group.

Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, yesterday joined appeals for the speedy release of Bossi but ruled out paying any ransom.

"I wish those who abducted him have mercy on him and return him to the Church so that his worried families and relatives may be relieved, that's our prayer for him," Lagdameo said in an interview with the Church-owned Radio Veritas.

Veritas also interviewed Fr. Luciano Benedetti, another PIME priest who was abducted in Sibuco, Zambonga del Norte in 1998 and released after 68 days of captivity.

Strategy

Benedetti, who returned a couple of years after his release and is now ministering to indigenous communities in the Visayas, said he expected Bossi to be moved from place to place.

"That is their strategy when you're in an open place, but I don't know with Fr. Bossi, maybe he is in a populated area hiding in some house," he said.

He said it would be hard to move the kidnapped Italian around as he would surely be noticed.

As for the motives behind his own kidnapping in 1998, Benedetti said there were three: Money, strengthen the image of the abductors' organization and secure political concessions from the government.

Benedetti clarified that no ransom was paid for him by his congregation or the Church, but thought "some sector" of the Church or maybe the government may have given money to his captors to pay for his "board and lodging."

He said his mother is so worried about him that she still calls him every Sunday to check on his situation.

Benedetti advised other foreign missionaries to study well the culture of the places where they are being assigned, particularly Mindanao. It would be better for them to stay in their churches and not go to the hinterlands, he said.

"Of course, we are Italians and we usually are ready to face any kind of situation, any kind of danger, but sometimes we are also naïve and simple people, somehow we underestimate what is really going on around us," he said.

Lagdameo noted the great sacrifices being made by Bossi and other Italian PIME missionaries in the Mindanao.

He said the CBCP holds all missionaries "high in our appreciation and in our gratitude because they are serving another country and serving our fellow Filipinos that we cannot reach." *AFP and Christine Avendaño and Jerome Aning*

Bishops divided on Pope's visit

THAT THE PLANNED visit of Pope Benedict XVI could be politicized, as some anti-administration prelates maintain, was unavoidable because of the Pope's dual role, said Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo.

"You must know that the Holy Father is not only a religious leader but also a state leader," said Lagdameo who is president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines which extended the invitation to the Pope.

The Pope is the leader of the Catholic Church and also a political sovereign as he heads the city-state of the Vatican.

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz has advised the Pope not to visit the Philippines, saying the visit "would dignify a national leadership that is suffering from dire lack of moral ascendancy not to mention its big socio-political liabilities."

"We don't know if that will happen, but such an interpretation is possible," Lagdameo said in an interview with Radio Veritas.

But Imus Bishop Luis Tagle said the Pope would not be able to go anywhere if all he would think about is that his visit would be "manipulated."

Tagle, who is being supported by Manila Archbishop Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales, said a papal visit would inspire the Catholics and remind them to be better Christians as well as of their mission in evangelizing Asia.

Rosales said the Pontiff was certain to come to the Philippines, but not this year. He said the timing of the papal visit was still being arranged.
Jerome Aning

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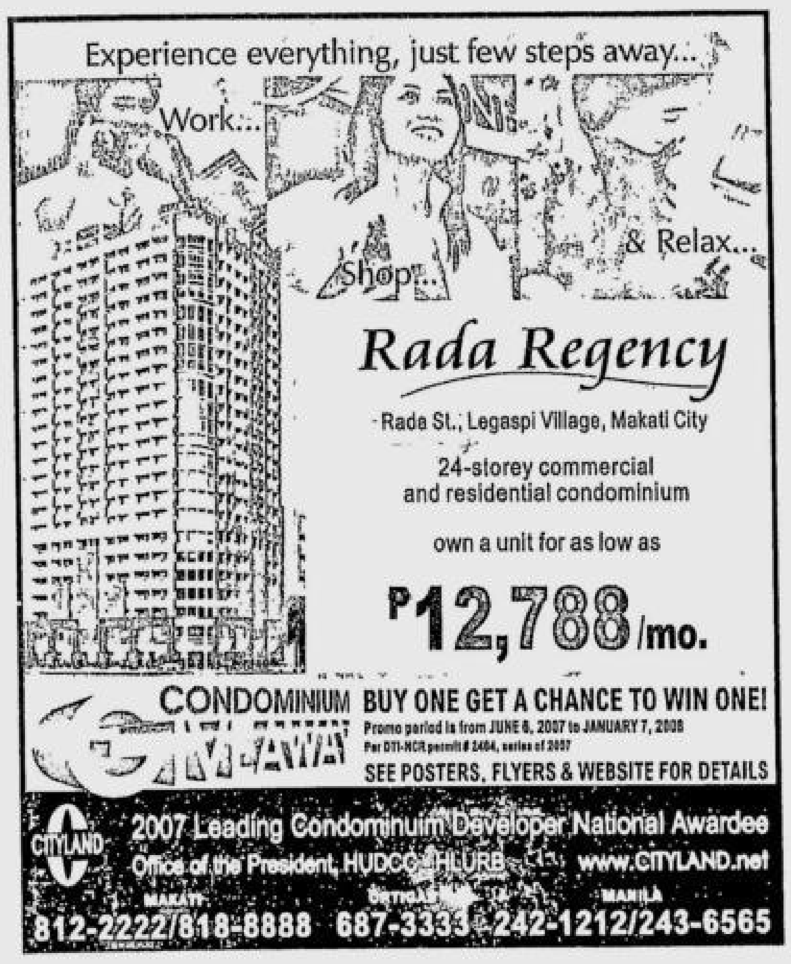

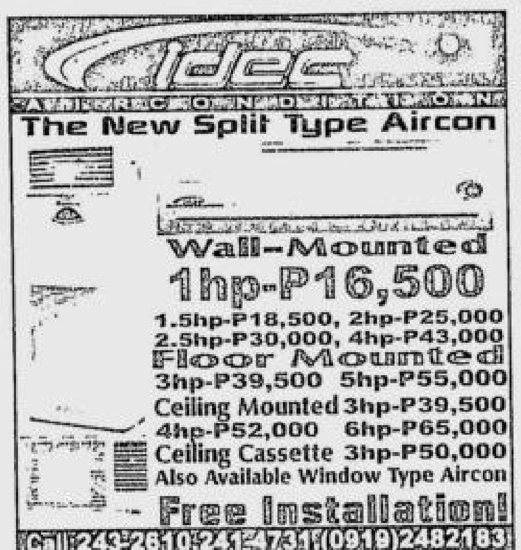

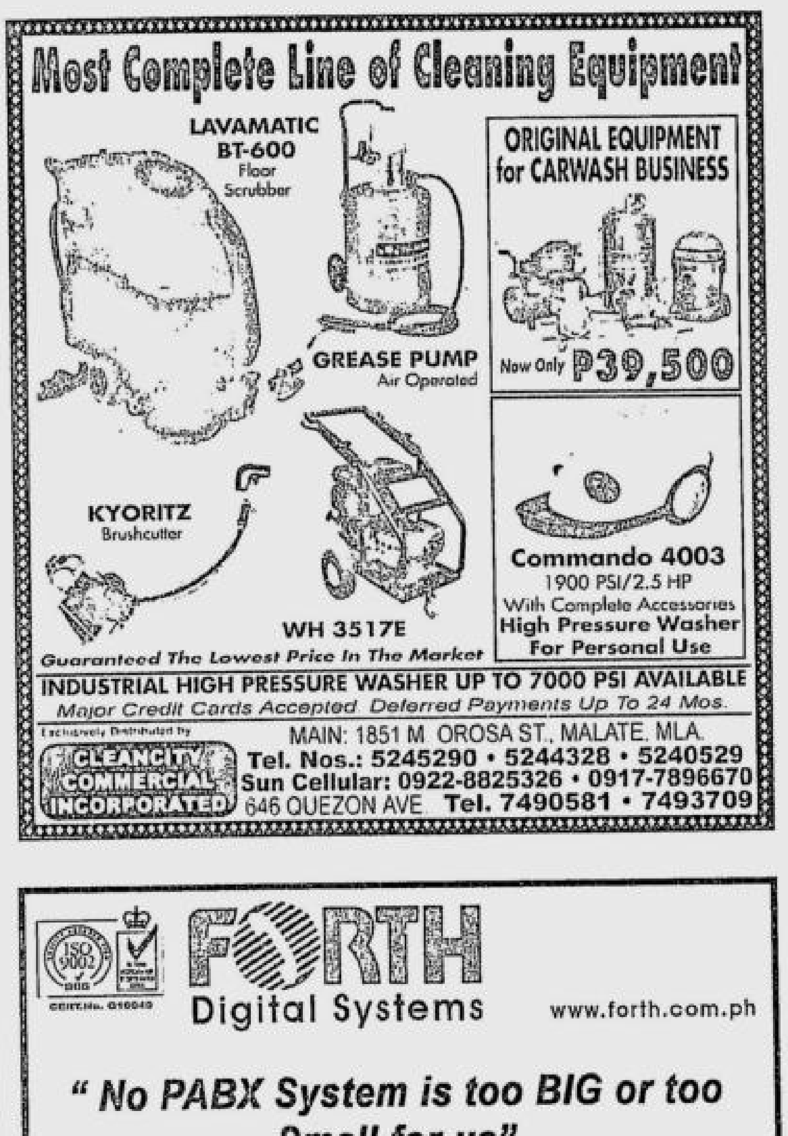

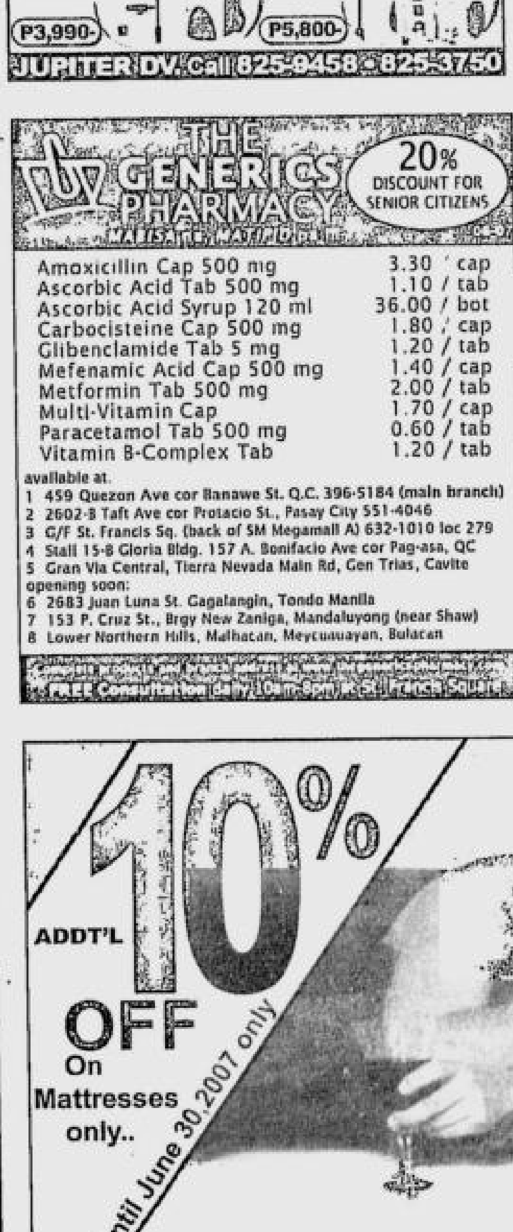

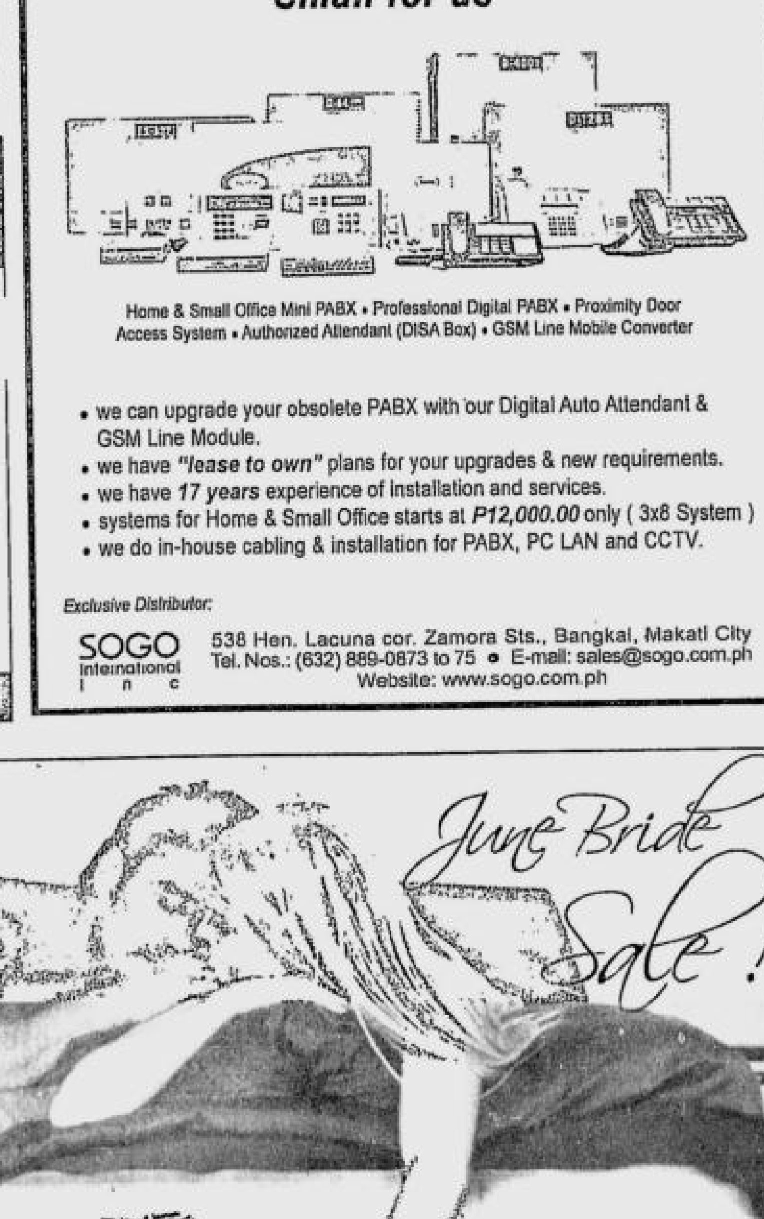

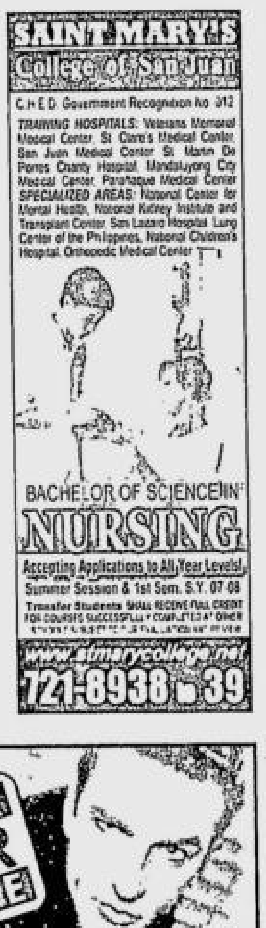

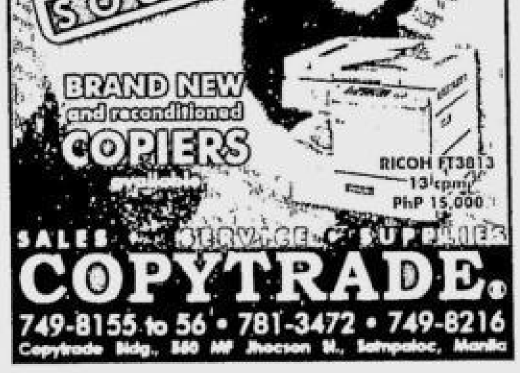

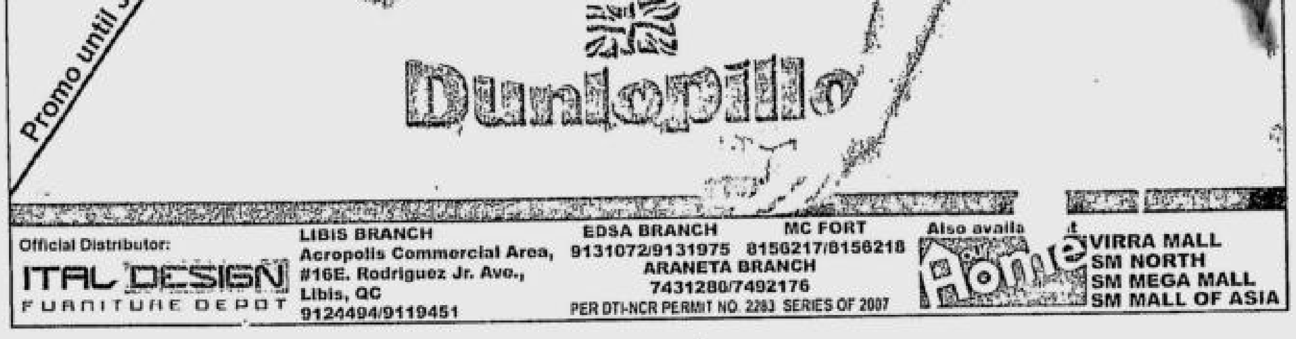

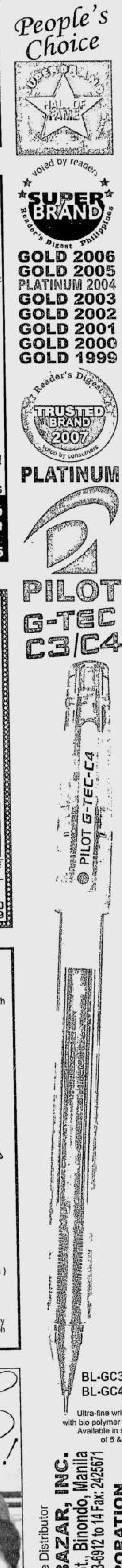

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Koko sues 2 execs for poll sabotage

By Norman Bordadora

GENUINE OPPOSITION SENATORIAL candidate Aquilino Pimentel III yesterday filed a complaint of electoral sabotage with the Commission on Elections against the provincial election supervisors of North Cotabato and South Cotabato for allegedly "padding" the votes of administration senatorial candidates in their areas.

Pimentel, in his complaint, identified the election supervisors as Lilia Radam of South Cotabato and Yogie Martizar of North Cotabato.

Pimentel filed 12 counts of electoral sabotage against Radam, who chaired the provincial board of canvassers in South Cotabato, and two counts of the same offense against Martizar, who chaired the PBC in North Cotabato.

Also named respondents were two other members of the North Cotabato board, Jose Agerio de Guzman and Gloria Mudanza.

Pimentel accused the election officials of violating Republic Act 9369 which penalizes "the tampering, increasing or decreasing the votes received by a candidate in any election, involving more than 5,000 votes."

Pimentel claimed that available election documents and testimony from witnesses revealed that Radam and John Does were responsible for allegedly padding the votes of Team Unity candidates Edgardo Angara, Joker Arroyo, Michael Defensor, Prospero Pichay, Ralph Recto and Juan Miguel Zubiri in General Santos City, Koronadal City, and in the municipalities of Banga, Lake Sebu, Norala, Polomolok, Sto. Niño, Surallah, Tampakan, Tantangan, T'boli and Tupi in South Cotabato .

According to Pimentel, a scrutiny of the certificates of canvass from these cities and municipalities and the statement of votes by municipality showed that Radam and other co-respondents allegedly padded the votes of Angara by 101,000 votes, Arroyo by 110,000 votes, Defensor by 109,000 votes, Pichay by 110,000 votes, Recto by 116,000 votes and Zubiri by 77,000 votes in the two cities and 10 towns of South Cotabato.

Pimentel said Radam, in conspiracy with persons who were still unknown at this time, "feloniously, deliberately and maliciously tampered and falsified" the statement of votes by municipality, thereby increasing the number of votes of the TU candidates.

In another complaint, Pimentel said Martizar, De Guzman and Mudanza should be held liable for illegally increasing the number of votes garnered by Zubiri in North Cotabato by more or less 130,000 votes while decreasing the votes garnered by Pimentel by more than 40,000 votes.

According to the complaint, the respondent election officials certified in the provincial certificate of canvass that Pimentel got approximately 95,000 votes while Zubiri obtained approximately 265,000 votes.

According to Pimentel, when the provincial COC for North Cotabato was scrutinized before the National Board of Canvassers, it was set aside because of manifest defects.

A re-canvass by the special provincial board of canvassers for North Cotabato found that Pimentel actually obtained 136,370 votes while Zubiri obtained only 132,295 votes, he said.

Pimentel and Zubiri are contesting the 12th and last place in the list of winners of the Senate contest. Pimentel is holding on to the 12th slot, but by a slim margin.

Pimentel said the respondents themselves "perpetrated and perpetuated the falsification" when they affixed their signatures on the PCOC and sent the allegedly falsified PCOC to the National Board of Canvassers.

PIMENTEL ARNOLD ALMACEN

'07 elections just as dirty as previous ones, says bishop

By Jerome Aning

AS FAR AS THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED election was concerned, it was as dirty as previous ones, a leading prelate said yesterday.

"What I can say about cheating, the buying of votes, is that it was not different from those (reported) in past elections. We can't say if there was an improvement, but I'm saying there was no difference because there was still cheating," Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines and Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said in an interview over Catholic Church-owned Radio Veritas.

Lagdameo also belied the assessments made by the government and other groups that the elections were "peaceful."

"The peacefulness they were talking about has a qualification," he said. "We can say it was peaceful because the cheating was done quietly, the buying of votes was done quietly, so even if it were 'peaceful' there were still violations of human rights."

The CBCP is expected to come out with its report on the conduct of the elections during its plenary session next month.

The CBCP's National Secretariat for Social Action, Justice and Peace, which served as a watchdog during the elections, will give its member-bishops an assessment of the democratic exercise.

Lagdameo also asked the Comelec to wrap up its canvassing of senatorial votes so that all the winners could be proclaimed and start serving the people by June 30.

"I am surprised that after almost one month, the counting is still not over," the archbishop said.

"[This] should be sped up because our countrymen are waiting for the results," he said.

In the same vein, Lagdameo congratulated all the election winners, saying his prayer was that all the officials "measure up to the great obligation that they have to the people of God, their countrymen."

2 new solons ask GMA to back new Speaker

TWO NEW CONGRESSMEN FROM CENtral Luzon and Southern Tagalog yesterday called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to support a change of leadership in the House of Representatives.

Pampanga Representative-elect Aurelio Gonzales, a province-mate of Ms Arroyo's, said a new Speaker would improve the trust rating and credibility of the House.

"If the President wants to realize her vision of the people uniting to free themselves from poverty and fear, then she must support a leadership in Congress that would be wholeheartedly behind her mission," said Gonzales, a member of Ms Arroyo's party, the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi).

The neophyte congressman said the President should support a House leadership that would help ensure economic progress under her administration.

Another first-termer, Laguna Representative-elect Edgar San Luis, said the last Congress had received the lowest ratings among the nation's primary institutions.

"We must restore the respect of our people in their chosen representatives in Congress," San Luis said.

"We must wipe out the public perception that most members of Congress are corrupt. We must reinstate the old image of congressmen as honorable and sincere leaders who would lead the people on the path to national progress and unity."

The two new solons' comments came in the wake of the speakership contest between the incumbent Jose de Venecia and Cebu Representative-elect Pablo Garcia.

San Luis said the House should concentrate on solving critical economic problems, such as poverty and unemployment, instead of reviving old issues that only stirred divisiveness and recriminations among the people.

"Now that the elections are over, we should all unite behind the program of the government to eliminate hunger, unemployment and poverty, and attain a sustainable mode of substantial growth for the economy," San Luis said. *Norman Bordadora*

Pinoys more tech-savvy than we think

By Riza T. Olchondra

CLARK FREEPORT—THE PHILIPPINE market is more Internet-savvy than we think and is ripe for new programs, even those made by amateurs, that can be viewed anytime with a mobile phone or portable device, said MediaQuest president Raymund Miranda, citing studies.

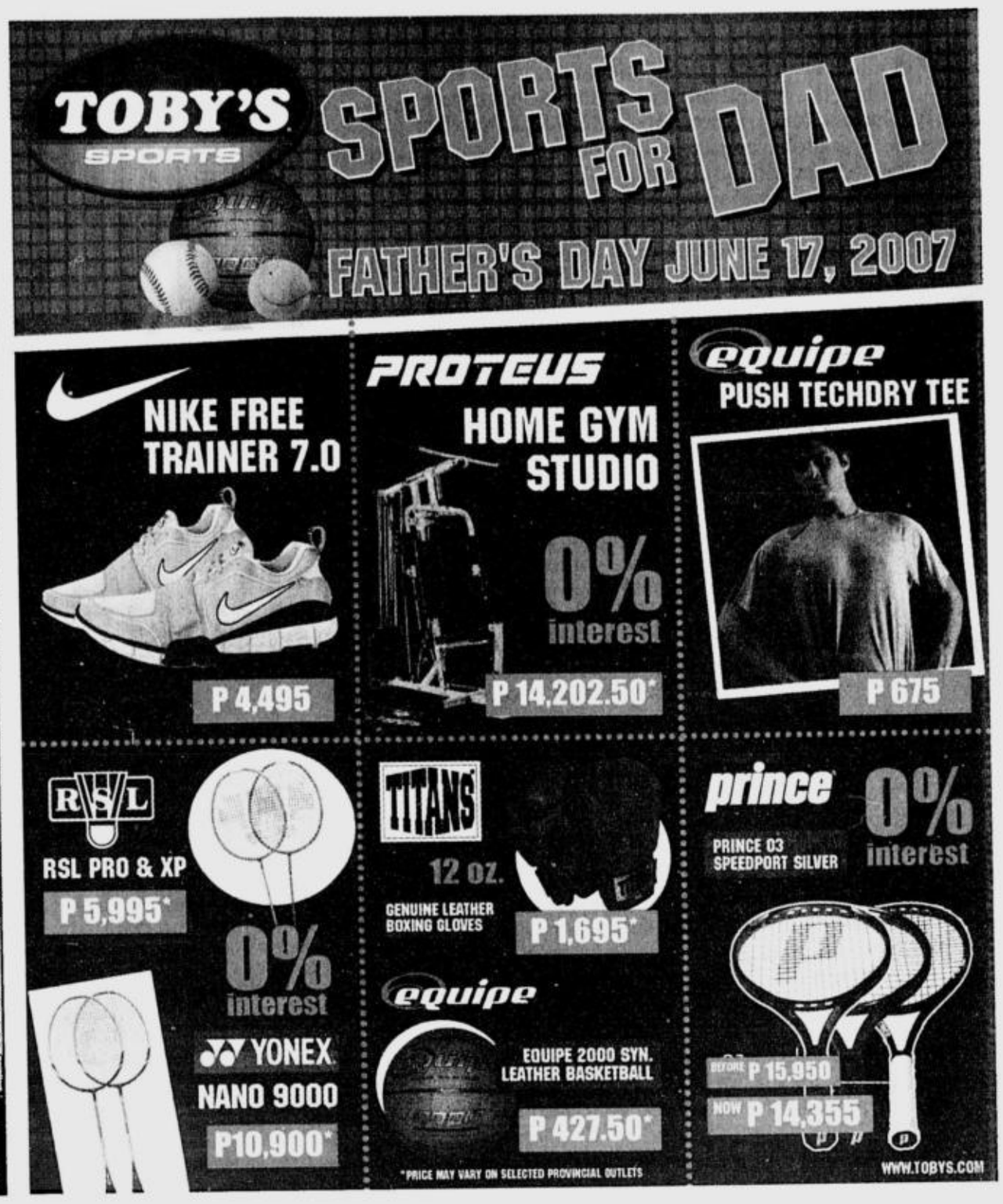
MediaQuest is a PLDT subsidiary that seeks to offer mobile TV services in the country.

"We are underestimating the Philippine market. The commonly used indicator of 18-percent PC penetration in Philippine homes is not accurate," Miranda told reporters during a weekend seminar organized by the Economic Journalists Association of the Philippines.

"Despite few PCs in use in households, about half or even more than half of Friendster's (36 million) users are based in the Philippines."

"According to a study, the reason for the widespread Friendster use despite the low PC penetration rate is that more and more people are going to Internet cafes to access the Internet if they do not have connections at home. Many people are also using their office Internet and computer for access," Miranda said.

What content makers can do with this information is to create e-media products that the market can buy directly, Miranda said.



PUMAPAYAG AKO

NA KUMAIN NG BUHOK

NA LUMALANGOY SA SARSANG MENUDO,

HINDI ISAULI ANG MAONG KAHIT
BUTAS PALA SA PUNDILLO,

HIGUPIN ANG INORDER NA KAPE KAHIT MALAMIG,

lagukin ang inorder na beer kahit hindi malamig,
tiisin ang mukha ng kaberang naka-ismid,
magbayad sa telepono'ng hindi ko ginamit,
tubuan ng balbas sa pagpapakabit ng internet,
tubuan ng kalyo sa kakatayo sa pila,

makinig [*sa album ng Air Supply habang naka-hold ang*] *linya,*

TANGGAPIN ANG

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at "pasens'ya na."

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, JUNE 15, 2007

ISSN 0116-2642

INQUIRER

Vol. 22 No. 187

OPINION

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Subscription Hotline 896-6000

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The real test

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS ENOUGH of a political pragmatist to know that, in the aftermath of the opposition's victory in the Senate race, she will have to find her own Donald Rumsfeld, and then fire him. The problem is, she will find more than one deadweight in her administration.

Rumsfeld, of course, was the controversial defense secretary who presided over or, more precisely, mismanaged the American occupation of Iraq. The clear antiwar message US voters sent the White House in last year's mid-term elections led US President George W. Bush to finally relieve Rumsfeld; not a few Republicans thought the decision came too late, since Rumsfeld's continuing presence at the Pentagon was a constant reminder during the campaign of the deterioration of the situation in Iraq.

Politically, Bush had no choice but to let go of his cantankerous defense secretary. Same thing with President Arroyo: Whether she admits it or not, the results of the Senate elections, the only nationwide contest and therefore the only referendum of national scope in the May 14 elections, force her to respond to the debacle. She has no choice.

The lessons of our own short history are clear: If an incumbent cares about the results of the next election, she has to respond to the results of the present one.

It does not come as a surprise, therefore, that the President has asked for the resignation of all Cabinet members and the heads of all government-owned and -controlled corporations. These are courtesy resignations; that is, the officials concerned pay the President the courtesy of tendering their resignation immediately, instead of individually making their case before her.

But Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, perhaps to emphasize the point that the President actually means business, decided not to use the term. "It's not courtesy resignation. The President asked them to submit their resignation so that she will have a free hand ... to reorganize." But of course. That is what courtesy resignations are for. (Besides, the President has to provide for loyal allies who are now out of a job, like outgoing Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.)

Already, two Palace insiders have leaked their own versions of the President's short list.

In both their lists—self-serving as these leaks sometimes are—the names of the heads of the government's top revenue-generating agencies appear: Jose Buñag, commissioner of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and Napoleon Morales, commissioner of the Bureau of Customs.

It is no surprise to find that the positions of BIR chief and Customs commissioner figure in the rumors; in major revamps, they almost always do, precisely because the posts are among the most coveted in the entire bureaucracy. But it is unusual to find the name of Ermita, the second most powerful man in Malacañang, included—even as a trial balloon.

But Buñag and Morales have nothing to do with the outcome of the elections. The same cannot be said about Ermita. While he himself did not run, his son did, as the running mate of Batangas governor-elect Vilma Santos. Today, Ermita's son is embroiled in a bitter electoral dispute; whatever the outcome of that contest, it is already clear that Ermita came out of the elections diminished.

Ephraim Genuino, the influential chair of the cash-rich Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., is another high official laid low by the elections. Both his sons lost, and Genuino himself figured in wire reports as an arrogant official entering voting centers in Makati City with armed bodyguards.

If the President accepts the resignation of close allies Ermita and Genuino, then it seems she is really serious about her vow to consider, forthwith, all her political debts paid.

Her real test, however, involves controversial or unpopular officials who did relatively well in the elections, such as the irascible Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez. In the last two years, Gonzalez has served a special function, acting as the President's lightning rod. In doing so, however, Gonzalez debased the administration of justice and deepened the divisiveness that marks Philippine politics. It is time for him and others like him to exit the stage.

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RP-Korea air talks were disgusting

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

INDEPENDENT PHILIPPINES? AS I SAID IN the previous column, we are not independent in many aspects of our life. We are in the grip of foreign pharmaceutical companies, foreign oil companies, foreign cement companies. Even in the field of civilian aviation, we are not independent. Foreign governments and foreign airlines dictate our aviation policies. Worse, it is our own officials who make it easy for foreigners to dictate to us. One of them is Undersecretary Edward H. Pagunsan of the Department of Transportation and Communications.

Pagunsan's actions at the recently concluded Philippine-South Korea air talks in Davao were highly irregular. Although he was the chair of the Philippine panel, he behaved as if he was a member of the South Korean panel. He argued for the Koreans and forced the members of the Philippine panel to accept the terms dictated by them. Is he, perchance, planning to be a Korean citizen?

Members of the RP panel (composed of representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Civil Aeronautics Board, Department of Tourism, Department of Trade and Industry, Philippine airline companies, Clark Development Corp.) were disgusted with Pagunsan for caving in, without even trying to put up a fight, to practically all the demands of the Koreans. According to those who were there, this is what happened:

The air talks were conducted with an almost total lack of transparency. Most sessions were private meetings between Pagunsan and the Korean chair and their aides, leaving the other RP panel members in the dark. They had to rely entirely on one-sided reports from Pagunsan on how the discussions were progressing.

Despite these constraints imposed by Pagunsan, the RP panel members adopted a unanimous position, expressed in a draft MOU signed by all the members, which they then asked the chair to relay to South Korea as RP's final proposal.

The Korean chair, in a brief plenary session on May 31:

- Castigated the Philippines for its proposal, which he declared was "very different" from the position taken by Pagunsan in the April 19 meeting in Seoul and in his private meetings with his Korean counterpart.
- Submitted a take-it-or-leave-it demand that included giving South Korea 19,000 seats per week on the Philippine-Korea routes (as against the current 6,800 seats a week, a whopping 179 percent increase).
- Warned that if RP did not capitulate, South Korea would gradually disapprove and phase out all existing extra-bilateral flights and disapprove all new application by any RP carrier.
- Warned that Korea would subject RP airlines to stricter inspections and take unspecified actions against them.
- Warned that Korea would not meet with RP in the next few years unless there is a "drastic change" in RP policy and the panel's position.
- Said that these actions would create a shortage of seats forcing Korean tourist traffic to drop from 600,000 to just 300,000 annually.

At one point, the Korean chair even blackmailed the Filipinos by warning that he would take the next plane out of Davao if the RP panel did not accept his demands.

And what did Pagunsan do? He did not give a firm response to these threats; on the contrary, he pressured his panel members to accede to the Korean demands, enumerating the dire effects of flight cancellations, repeatedly stressing the weakness of the Philippine position and that of our airline industry compared to the might of the South Koreans. Pagunsan kept saying we have to bow to the more economically and technologically advanced Koreans. He should have been in the Korean panel.

At one point, some members of the Korean panel conveyed to G. Palec of the DFA, vice chair of the RP panel, that Korea would accept a compromise deal that would limit capacity to 14,000 seats, but Pagunsan dismissed these back-channel signals and said he would listen only to the hard-line demands of the Korean chair.

The RP panel members then appealed to Pagunsan to conduct the next crucial discussion in plenary session so that there would be full transparency and to ensure that RP communicates its position properly and follows through with its fallback position if Korea resists. Pagunsan agreed.

Then, without telling the panel members, he slipped off to meet privately with the Korean chair instead of holding a plenary session. He later told the panel that the other side would not budge and that he decided to accept their demands, thus presenting the panel with a fait accompli.

When half of the panel members take a strong position against capitulation, especially if those members include the aviation regulator (CAB), the chief diplomatic agency (DFA), and the RP flag carrier with the biggest stake in the RP-Korea market (PAL), the chair is duty-bound to find a way to address their concerns. Instead, their concerns were ignored in a supposed tie-braking maneuver that he conducted behind closed doors. In fact, he applied pressure on the CAB representative, executive director C. Arcilla, to change his vote by warning him that it would displease President Macapagal-Arroyo. To his credit, Arcilla did not back down.

Why did Pagunsan behave that way? I don't know. But maybe we should go back to what happened before the talks. There are reports that Pagunsan slipped out of Manila last April 19, more than a month before the formal talks, to meet with his counterpart in Seoul without the knowledge of the RP panel.

What were the results of the Davao talks? In one word, disgusting.

Abbas' bad neighborhood

WORLD VIEW

Daoud Kuttab

WITH GAZA POISED ON THE BRINK OF CIVIL war, pity poor Mahmoud Abbas, who took over as president of the Palestinian Authority two and a half years ago, after the death of Yasser Arafat. An academic by profession, Abbas has tried mightily to lead the Palestinian people with civility, adherence to democratic principles and public disdain for violence.

He never had a chance. Palestinian rivals, both from his own Fatah party and from the Islamists of Hamas, as well as the Israelis, perceived Abbas' civility as weakness.

Abbas introduced a totally different style of management from that of Arafat. Dressed in his military suit until his last day, Abu Ammar (Arafat's revolutionary nom de guerre) did not believe that it was time to become a civilian president while the Israeli occupation continued. Dressed in a suit and tie, Abbas introduced professional Western-style management to the presidency, but had no idea what to do with grass-roots militants.

One of the first comments I heard from journalists was that Abbas, a family man, went home at lunchtime and worked regular business hours. His other name, Abu Mazen, is not a revolutionary name but reflects the practice of naming a person as the father of his eldest son. Abbas' son, Mazen, runs a local advertising agency.

In his attempt to counter Arafat's political corruption and micromanagement, Abbas lost whatever chance he had to maintain the loyalty of the Fatah leadership, newly appointed PA officials, security personnel, and, most importantly, local militants. Calling for national elections, while politically correct, was political suicide, for he lacked any idea of the possible outcome and did very little to ensure the discipline of Fatah. An attempt at a primary to choose Fatah candidates backfired, owing to fraud and the losers' refusal to honor the results. Rival Fatah candidates then split the party's vote, allowing Hamas an easy victory.

Negotiations with the Israelis was one area where Abbas, who led the Oslo process that saw the creation of the Palestinian Authority, thought he could do well. But, unlike Oslo, when Abbas was working under Arafat and able to project power from that base, as Palestinian president he was both negotiator and supposedly the center of power. The Israelis discerned Abbas' weakness early on, and once Hamas was elected in a landslide, had little incentive to help him despite the prodding of the United States.

Not only was Abbas politically weak, with few friends among Fatah militants, but he also didn't show much interest in what was happening in Gaza. He spent as little time as he could there, preferring his Ramallah office on the West Bank and spending time with visiting politicians and meeting world leaders there or abroad. And, while he was technically the commander in chief of the Palestinian forces, these forces lacked the will to stand up to Hamas' growing power.

The economic siege on Palestine after the Hamas victory further weakened Abbas. With no salaries to pay teachers (or even the security services), his ability to influence even his own presidential guard was severely limited. During a meeting, which I attended, with a delegation from the International Press Institute to obtain the release of BBC journalist Alan Johnston, abducted in Gaza in March, Abbas explained the PA's inability and weakness. Soldiers march on their stomachs, he said, and complained that his own forces have not been able to renew their equipment or obtain badly needed ammunition for seven years.

Ironically, the Israelis and the world community, which had basically frozen Palestinian finances, wanted Abbas to continue to control the security forces, despite Fatah's loss in the parliamentary elections. Israel and the United States led a virtual blockade on Palestine, with Israel refusing to return collected taxes and the United States pressing banks not to recognize the signature of the Palestinian finance minister. The nominal reason is Hamas' refusal to recognize Israel. But most Arab countries also don't recognize Israel, and yet the banking world deals with them normally.

A compromise power-sharing agreement brokered by the Saudis initially seemed to be a solution. According to the Mecca agreement signed last February, Hamas would give up important ministries such as finance, interior, and foreign affairs, while Abbas would ensure the end of the economic siege. Four months later, however, the siege has not been lifted, and the Hamas ministers (such as former Foreign Minister Mahmoud Zahhar and Interior Minster Said Siyam) who were forced out now feel betrayed and are demanding their jobs back.

If the Israelis and the international community want Abbas to remain in power, they must change their approach dramatically, by lifting the economic siege and providing his presidency with military and political support. And, if the Israelis are convinced that Abbas is too weak to do anything, they can help the Palestinians by releasing the Fatah strongman, Marwan Barghouti, from an Israeli jail.

Otherwise, Abbas will be left with no alternative but to follow the advice of a leading Palestinian professor, Ali Jirbawi, who suggested simply that Abbas should dissolve the Palestinian Authority and return power to the Israelis, who remain legally and practically responsible for the areas they occupied in 1967.

Project Syndicate

Daoud Kuttab is a Palestinian director of the Institute of Modern Media at Al Quds University in Ramallah.

Perfect timing

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

NO LESS THAN A TOTAL CABINET SHAKE-UP can allow President Macapagal-Arroyo to regain the political initiative to rejuvenate her moribund government in the next three years, following her crushing defeat in the May senatorial election.

The Palace announcement that the President has asked all members of the Cabinet and heads of 117 government-owned and -controlled corporations and government financial institutions to resign was emphatic.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told the press the other day: "It's not a courtesy resignation. The President asked them to submit their resignation so that she will have a free hand." That announcement foreclosed half-measures. It left no doubt about the intention of a sweeping top-level overhaul. If the President has to be ruthless on her collaborators to save her government from paralysis, the time is now. She appears to have seized the moment. The timing is perfect.

The announcement spared her more controversial Cabinet members—especially those responsible for her election debacle—from exiting in disgrace by being sacked. The order allows all Cabinet members, including the undeserving, to save face. It also punishes the Cabinet members who failed to deliver the votes in the areas assigned to them.

The decision to do a total revamp sent a few signals. First, it implicitly conceded defeat in the senatorial election, and acknowledged a change in the balance of power in the upper chamber.

The other signal is that the President has, without having to say it, heeded the unmistakable mandate resoundingly expressed by the election results for the Senate, more than the results for the House of Representatives and local posts. The mandate is that: It's time for change, not only of the entire Cabinet, but more so of policies, involving national security, human rights abuses and financial and economic matters—the key areas on which the administration was pilloried during the last election.

The total revamp signals a rare dawning of humility, of bowing to the sovereign will by an administration whose stock in trade during the past six years has been arrogance and pushing to the limits the arbitrary use of power. It also tacitly recognized that the mid-term election was a referendum of the Arroyo administration.

Such a sensitivity to pubic opinion and electoral mandate is surely bound to be appreciated by the public. It can be interpreted as an honest effort at political reconciliation and opens the shutters for a fresh blast of the winds of policy revision.

The revamp is a political masterstroke in timing. It didn't wait for the proclamation by the Commission on Elections on the final election results. It thus stole the thunder from the proclamation. It handed the President the opportunity to regain the initiative and the key to convert an electoral disaster into an advantage. It came at a time when the economy, acting independently of political uncertainty and turmoil, was showing signs of an economic turnaround.

The revamp comes as the triumphant opposition in the Senate begins to crack in disarray over how to divide the spoils. Already, opposition senators are squabbling over the Senate presidency and the chairmanships of key committees, and several blocs and factions have emerged among the 10 apparent winners last May and the five opposition holdovers in the Senate.

Together, the opposition senators can form a new majority to take control of the Senate, but their disarray offers the President an opportunity to exploit. The election has left the administration with a bloc of eight, including the two Team Unity candidates who survived the Genuine Opposition tide, Senators Edgardo Angara and Joker Arroyo. Unless the members of the enlarged opposition in the Senate pull themselves together as a solid entity over the Senate presidency and over policy issues, they could quickly squander their electoral gains and allow the President to thwart their objective of taking control of the Senate and seizing the initiative for setting the national agenda for the next three years.

The inclusion of the heads of government corporations and financial institutions in the announced revamp involves the most extensive head-chopping in the public sector ever to be undertaken by the seven-year Arroyo administration. The announcement followed the report of the World Bank that the Philippines does not need to impose new taxes but needs to plug leaks in the collection of existing taxes to meet its fiscal targets. Joachim von Amsberg, World Bank director fro the Philippines, said tax leakages were the critical element that could sustain or break the fiscal gains last year. "My suggestion would be to focus all its energies on raising and improving tax administration," he said. New measures are not necessary "in the short term," he added.

In the first quarter, the Bureau of Internal Revenue collected P143 billion, P12 billion less than the P155-billion collection target set by the government for the period. The shortfall in revenue collection is blamed for the current budget deficit of P52 billion, exceeding the targeted ceiling of P45.8 billion.

Revenue last year was boosted by the increase in the value-added tax rate from 10 percent to 12 percent in February 2006. The value-added tax was one of the key fiscal measures passed by the administration to crack the deficit. There are concerns that the fiscal gains may not be sustained in view of the revenue shortfall during the first quarter.

One lucky man

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

FROM THE BEGINNING, THE CHILD VICTIM'S search for justice seemed doomed. While her gay guardian was under trial for trafficking, having pimped the girl to various clients, her case attracted initial media attention because it was alleged that one of her clients had been a powerful politician.

Placed under the protection of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the girl told her story to a team of three women lawyers approached by the DSWD. But when the lawyers wanted the politician-client included in the charge sheet, the judge immediately swatted them down, admonishing them not to drag the name of an "honorable public official" into the trial.

Only when the girl gave an interview to this newspaper (with the consent of the DSWD and her lawyers) in which she gave a detailed and rather graphic account of her encounters with that "honorable" official was public opinion roused enough to demand that her prominent client be tried as well for rape.

But even then the case still had a tough road to travel on the way to the courtroom. There were those who chastised the INQUIRER, the girl's lawyers and the DSWD for allowing the interview to take place and be published, as if reading the details of the politician's smarmy behavior was worse than the abuse itself. There were commentaries that the politician was being subjected to "trial by publicity," and that feminists were using the case as a battering ram against male privilege. One columnist, who is now himself a public official, even said there was no rape at all since the girl was a "child prostitute" and that she had consensual sex with the politician, forgetting, of course, that the girl was 12 years old at the time of the assault.

* * *

STILL, the case proceeded to court. But even after the accused rapist was identified as Rep. Romeo Jalosjos, the media seemed more interested in "outing" the girl, hounding her and her lawyers as they entered and left the courtroom.

I remember TV news footage and photos of these encounters, the girl's head swathed beneath a jacket while her women lawyers led her along the corridors and out to a waiting vehicle. What was the girl thinking, I often wondered to myself. Was she feeling not just under siege but somehow guilty as well, hounded by the hungry media?

The trial hit numerous snags, including the contentious issue of the girl's age at the time of her encounters with the congressman. Fortunately, there was by this time a law on child abuse that made child sexual exploitation a crime. So even if, as that columnist alleged, the girl was paid for her efforts, the fact that she was a child still made her "client" a rapist.

Despite the publicity, it was still a dicey proposition. Weighed against the law and the fact that any adult who has sex (paid or unpaid) with a child is a criminal, was the suspect's not inconsiderable political influence and power. At one time, the girl's lawyers even needed police protection against unidentified callers who threatened all sorts of mayhem against them.

* * *

THEN the unexpected happened. Jalosjos was found guilty of rape and sentenced to double life sentences for each of two sexual encounters with the girl.

Concerned legislators, worried about the House's reputation, called for the censuring of Jalosjos and his dismissal from the chamber after his conviction. Incredibly, the House leadership balked at this, arguing that the Supreme Court still had to rule with finality on the case. Indeed, it wasn't until many years later, and after Jalosjos himself had run and won another term in the House, that the Supreme Court upheld the rape conviction. Finally, the House leaders were moved to banish Jalosjos from its rolls.

Things could be said to have ended here. The girl was placed under the Witness Protection Program and is said to be living abroad with her adoptive parents. Jalosjos did time in Muntinlupa, though he seemed to be spending an inordinate amount of time in hospitals and won plaudits for bankrolling various income-generating projects for other inmates.

Meantime, Katrina Legarda, one of the girl's lawyers, accuses Jalosjos of failing to indemnify the victim as ordered by the court.

* * *

NOW Jalosjos is back in the limelight, opening once more a protracted struggle for justice.

Note that this is not the first time that the former congressman's influential friends have sought to spring him from behind bars. Some years back, there was a proposal to grant him a presidential pardon but this was revoked after vigorous public protests.

Now comes news that the President, using her prerogative, has commuted the double life sentence imposed on Jalosjos, which if implemented would mean that he has but three more short years to go before he can walk away a free man.

The President's spokespersons aren't even arguing morality or decency here. They simply contend that the President was well within her powers, and that Jalosjos, nearing 70 and supposedly ailing, met the criteria for commutation.

I tell you, Jalosjos is one lucky man. With his money, which he has refused to share with his victim despite the court order, he bought himself a much more pleasant environment in the national penitentiary, including a tennis court and gourmet bakery, if I'm not mistaken. Then he finds every excuse to escape confinement, winning accommodations in hospitals for a wide array of ailments. He even wins back his House seat.

Meanwhile, his friends and family keep the pressure on Malacañang, including harnessing their considerable political network to bring out the vote for the President's favored candidates. Is it any accident that Jalosjos seems to find his fate improving after every election?

Cutting through complexity

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

CLASSES HAVE FINALLY OPENED AND I WILL face a new batch of over 160 students this semester. The challenge is to live up to my reputation both as a historian and a teacher. Coping with the curriculum is easy, but living up to the students' ideals is another matter because many of the legends that surround me are simply untrue, or at best half-true.

In the days before I grew enough grey hair to be assigned air-conditioned classrooms, students noticed that I perspired a lot (from the exertion of lecturing) and used baby diapers, instead of a handkerchief, to dry myself. I thought this a novel way to deal with the heat, for how can you beat an absorbent cotton diaper? The next best thing would be one of those coarse "Good Morning" face towels you see like yokes on the bare necks of jeepney drivers. Unfortunately, students misread the teacher who used diapers as a face towel and branded him eccentric.

With the reputation for eccentricity firmly established, the urban legends followed. One student asked, "Is it true that you came to class once dressed as a pirate? Is it true that you came with a costume complete with sword, eye patch and a parrot?"

I didn't know where that came from, so I replied, "No, I didn't come to class as a pirate, I came as the parrot!" And because teachers do not lie, that remark was taken literally and I now have a reputation of coming to class in a bird outfit.

I did come to the first day of class once in my old monk's habit. The sixth-century cut was so new to the 21st-century students that they were terrified. But that was not the punch-line. I introduced myself and told them how happy I was that they had an interest in learning biblical Greek. Stunned, everyone just sat in their seats and only recovered when I told them they were in a class on Philippine history.

Every semester my students cross their fingers, hoping that I will be inspired enough to do my (in)famous Josephine Bracken impersonation where I act out the two hilarious versions of her miscarriage in costume that comes complete with a curly wig and a pillow inside the "daster." If at all, one of the life lessons they will learn from class will be expectation and disappointment.

When I was younger, I would come to the first day of class early, pick a seat in the back and wait for the students to file in. I would hide my face in my arms, pretend to sleep and count the minutes before the students became restless. In time, a rabble-rouser would stand up and incite the class to leave room and teacher. When he left the room, I would stand up lock the door and introduce myself, but not before I had talked to innocent students and asked what they had heard about the teacher and his grading system. Those who gave feedback turned red when they discovered that I was their teacher. Unfortunately, I'm too old to pass for a college student these days and can't play this trick anymore.

One would think that students would flock to a teacher who gives high grades for minimal effort and avoid one who gives low grades and horrendous tests. Unlike most teachers who cancel the lowest score attained in tests during the term, I prefer to cancel the highest score. The rationale is simple, if you cancel the lowest score you are giving allowance for bad-hair day, you encourage mediocrity. But if you cancel the highest, you are removing a chance or "*tsamba*" score from the equation and encourage consistency. If your grades are consistently high, canceling the highest will not matter very much, but if your grades are low, then canceling the highest score really matters.

Bonus questions are written in the *baybayin* or pre-colonial Philippine script. Essay questions are designed to make students read and analyze a given document. In one case, my students were asked to read Antonio Pigafetta's account of the Battle of Mactan in 1521. Surely it is easier to just ask an objective, fill-in-the blank question or perhaps make the student sweat over true or false. But that is not as challenging as asking the student to use the primary source document and narrate the events and outcome of the battle, not from the viewpoint of the chronicler of the Magellan expedition but from that of a fish. What will a fish (presumably a species we now know as *lapu-lapu*) see but legs in murky water? (One student filled a page with "glub, glub, glub..." and ended with, "Sorry, I cannot understand fish language.") Senseless it seemed at the outset, but it does make the students read and reread a given text and think outside of the box.

Another famous question was, "What is the significance of the dog in the execution scene of the Marilou-Diaz Abaya film on Rizal?" Students gave very elaborate answers like: "Before Rizal was shot, the dog was on a leash, but when he fell, the dog ran round his corpse. This symbolizes that we were once enslaved but Rizal's death freed us all." To everyone's surprise the question could be answered by one simple word: None or *Wala*.

History is not just about dates, names, places and events. It is supposed to teach the student to be critical in dealing with texts and more critical in dealing with questions that require commonsense answers expressed in a clear and lucid manner. Cutting through complexity is a skill everyone has to learn.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Loving story

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE APPROPRIATE, A LOVE story involving a couple with the surname Loving. But more than a love story, the case was a landmark in civil rights, offering lessons not just for Americans but for the whole world.

On June 12, 1967, the US Supreme Court ruled in a "Loving vs Virginia" case that laws barring interracial marriages were unconstitutional. At that time, there were still 17 American states that had such "anti-miscegenation laws" all of which were rendered null and void by the ruling.

I will explain, shortly, how Filipinos in the States were also affected by these laws, but let me get first to the Lovings' story.

Lovings vs Virginia

The 1967 Supreme Court decision came in response to a case filed by Richard and Mildred Loving against the state of Virginia. Richard was white and Mildred black. (I'm going to use "black" here instead of the current politically correct term "African-American.") Both were from the state of Virginia, had fallen in love and wanted to get married but couldn't because Virginia had a Racial Integrity Act which prohibited interracial marriages.

In the American system, each state can formulate its own laws as long as these do not violate provisions of the Constitution. It was in 1958 when the Lovings wanted to marry and at that time, interracial couples couldn't get married in Virginia but could in Washington, D.C., which was right at the doorstep of Virginia. So the Lovings crossed the border and got married.

One would have thought they could then live happily ever after, but when they returned to Virginia to live, their home was raided one night and they were arrested. Virginia's Racial Integrity Act didn't just forbid interracial marriages within Virginia, but also didn't recognize marriages outside of the state.

The Lovings were sentenced to a year's imprisonment, but were given a choice: their sentence would be suspended if they agreed to live outside of Virginia for 25 years. The Lovings did leave, settling down in Washington where Richard took up a job as a bricklayer. But the Lovings' self-exile was not easy since they were away from family and friends. They wanted to return.

Eventually they wrote to Robert Kennedy, who at that time was the US attorney general, asking for legal assistance. Kennedy referred the case to the American Civil Liberties Union, where two lawyers offered to take up the case. Virginia's Supreme Court upheld the Interracial Act, with the judge, Leon Bazile, writing: "Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, Malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. ... The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix."

The case then moved on to the US Supreme Court, which ruled on June 12, 1967 that the anti-miscegenation laws were unconstitutional.

Mongolian or Malay?

Looking back now, I'm amazed at how such laws could have existed in the United States so late into the 20th century. Apartheid South Africa and Nazi Germany had similar laws, but then it wasn't surprising given how racism was so much part of state and religious ideology (the South African apartheid regime would cite the Bible as the basis for their racist policies). We tend to think of the United States as a bastion of freedom and human rights but forget racism was (and still is) a burning issue.

The term "miscegenation" ("mixing of genus") dates back only to the 19th century, but anti-miscegenation laws go back to the 17th century, during the British colonial period. Virginia had one of those early interracial bans on marriage as well as sexual relations. Such laws clearly had white slave-owners and black slaves in mind. The ban on interracial sex was, of course, constantly violated but interracial marriages were effectively suppressed.

Even after slavery was abolished after the Civil War, anti-miscegenation laws continued and were even expanded in the 20th century, with the new waves of non-white immigrants. During the first part of the 20th century, many Filipino men, mainly Ilokano, migrated to the United States as workers. Many of the *manongs* who ended up in California remained bachelors because that state did not allow them to marry Caucasian women.

Who knows what love stories transpired in those years. Some brave couples went off to other states where they could marry. Others, mainly Filipinos who went to work in the states of Washington and Alaska, did marry Native Americans and "non-white" immigrants. Many others remained bachelors. In the 1970s and 1980s, many of the retired old-timers returned to the Philippines where they were able to find young Filipina brides.

Scientists generally recognize that race is an artificial category—all humans have the same genes, with greater variations within "races" than between them. "Race" is based on our perceptions of physical appearance, which can be arbitrary as was shown in California's anti-miscegenation law. Originally, California banned marriage between "Whites" and "Mongolians," the latter category defined to include Filipinos. In 1933, a Filipino, Salvador Roldan, wanted to marry a white woman and challenged California's anti-miscegenation law, arguing that Filipinos were "Malay" and not "Mongolian." The California judge handling his case agreed with him, but two weeks after that court decision, California's Senate amended their anti-miscegenation statute to include the "Malay" race. I couldn't find information on what Roldan and his girlfriend did. California kept its anti-miscegenation law until 1948.

Even today, Americans grapple constantly with race. Their national censuses still insist on asking for racial classification, with all kinds of categories: American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. There is a "Some Other Race" category for "mulatto," "creole," "mestizo."

The reality is that beyond skin color, we all look pretty much alike. Armed with a few local phrases, I have passed as Japanese, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Mexican, Brazilian (OK, Japanese-Brazilian), even Indian (where they thought I was from one of the northern states).

Back to our love story. The Lovings did get to live in Virginia, but life for interracial couples, and their children, remains difficult in many parts of the United States. The prejudice remains and I am sure many Filipinos remain affected, whether as children of interracial marriages or not. What's so sad is that I've met so many Filipinos in the States who are themselves quite racist, with very condescending views of blacks and Hispanics, and also intolerant of other forms of diversity (for example, sexual orientation). In the Philippines, racism remains strong as well toward children of black GIs, and toward our Negrito groups or, generally, anyone with dark skin.

I'd like to see our schools dealing with the fallacy of race, and the dangers of racism. A good place to start might be this Loving story.

Can errors denied be corrected?

LETTERS

SOMETHING IN THE ARTICLE "Fixing education flaws," written by Fernando del Mundo, really made my blood boil. (INQUIRER, 6/5/07)

The Department of Education said that the percentage of "correctness" of the public school textbook "Ang Bagong Pilipino" is anywhere from 90 percent to 94 percent. I find this incredible because a panel of DepEd staff and academicians themselves confirmed the presence in this book of 9 conceptual, 20 factual and 47 language errors. That's a lot! Doesn't the DepEd realize the meaning of that?

It's like saying that an electric fan that blows hot air is still a good buy! I can see why Antonio Calipjo Go is not keen on working with the DepEd, and I believe him when he says that the book in question has more than 100 errors. I find little comfort when I hear the DepEd officials say that "leaflets containing corrections have been published." What errors were corrected when their very existence had been denied in the first place?

We, the people, know the real score and the DepEd fools nobody but itself. That's why I'm doing everything possible just so I could keep my four children from attending public schools. I know they will not learn anything from people who say one thing yet do the exact opposite.

Ignoring the symptoms, we deny the disease that's causing them. Very soon we will be confronted with the punishment we deserve—*casus inoperabilis*.

—ALBERT ALLAN CONSTANTINO, M.D.,
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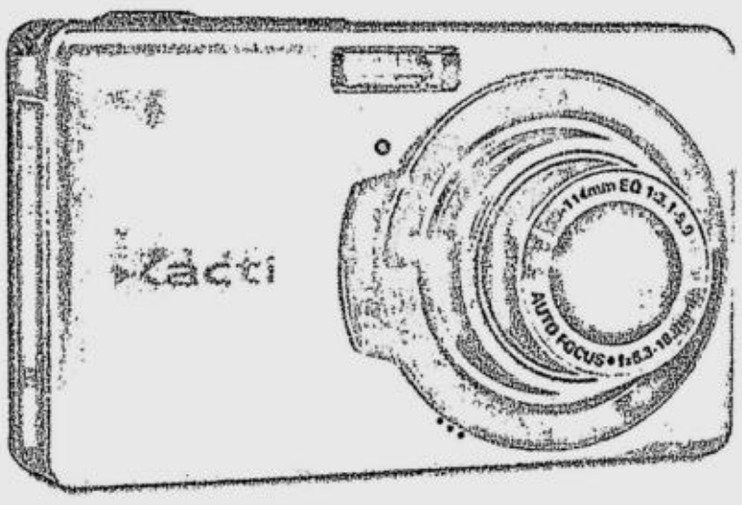

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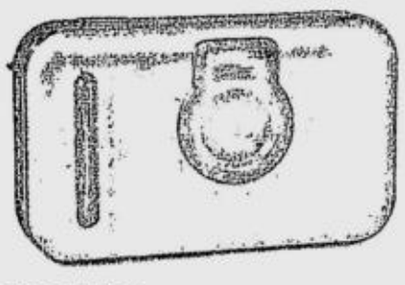

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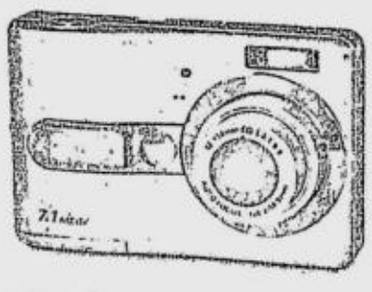

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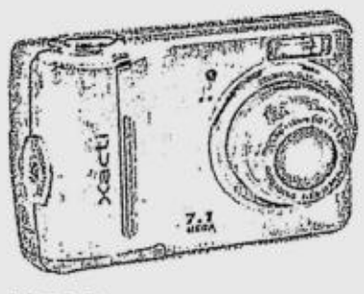

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Good luck to 'Cavs'

ON THE DAY THE first game of the 2007 NBA finals was scheduled, I read the news about the "Cavaliers Club" that reelected Sen. Panfilo Lacson said was a-forming. (INQUIRER, 6/08/ 07) What a coincidence. I couldn't help but smile, thinking at first that Lacson et al. were just huge fans of Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James—that's why the name.

Seriously speaking, I admire the likes of Senator Lacson and the three other gentlemen who would compose the bloc (Gringo Honasan, Rodolfo Biazon and Antonio Trillanes IV). Each one of them has shown himself man enough to fight for what he believes is right. He is not afraid to face the consequences of his actions.

If the Cleveland Cavaliers have James as their superstar, the "Senate Cavaliers" have Trillanes. Both of them, at a very young age, have proven themselves to be competent in their respective fields: James, by bringing the Cleveland Cavaliers to the NBA Finals, and Trillanes for winning in the 2007 senatorial race despite his being in prison.

This bloc will provide the four former military men a great opportunity to fight for their advocacies as a team. It should be easy for them to jell with each other. And I think it will be nice to see this development.

Good luck to the Senate Cavaliers. I hope you continue doing what you think is the best for the whole country. Don't let anyone ruin your comradeship.

—MELANIE P. ALDEON,
58 Lakeview Drive St.,
Bagong Ilog,
Pasig City

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Unfounded accusations against Garcia

I WAS DUMBFOUNDED BY THE vileness of Belinda Olivares-Cunanan's column titled "Gwendolyn as Cebu's Dragon Lady," which was actually a verbal assault on the Garcias of Cebu. (INQUIRER, 6/12/07)

The piece was a veritable character assassination of Rep. Pablo Garcia and his children, especially GSIS president Winston Garcia and Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, based as it was on innuendos, rumors and baseless accusations.

I wonder why the INQUIRER allowed Cunanan to write about payoffs allegedly made by the Garcias to congressmen, when she could not produce any proof of her wild and libelous allegation.

In my opinion, Cunanan misread the INQUIRER article on Governor Garcia. It was clear that she was just emphasizing the fact that, based on the Garcias' personal experiences, Jose de Venecia cannot be trusted to keep his word not to seek the prime minister's post through Charter change.

What made Cunanan's column more despicable is the well-known fact that Cunanan is a rah-rah girl of Gina de Venecia, the wife of Speaker De Venecia, a fact that Cunanan herself had admitted in her past columns. Cunanan is obviously beholden to the De Venecias.

Where now is Cunanan's objectivity and impartiality? How could she intelligently discuss the issues concerning the speakership challenge of Representative Garcia against De Venecia?

Cunanan made a lot of fuzz about the statements of losing senatorial candidate John Osmeña who discredited the Garcias' vast support in Cebu. But even if Osmeña is a Cebuano, how could he speak for the Cebuanos when he did not even win in Cebu last May 14? In his home province, he only placed 15th among the senatorial candidates.

Likewise, to set the record straight, Governor Garcia won by over 461,000 votes in last month's midterm election, a record-setting margin in Cebu, even as her province went against the national trend in the senatorial elections. These only show that contrary to Osmeña's claim, the Garcias maintained their family's wide base of support in Cebu, which was shown in 2004 when they gave President Macapagal-Arroyo her lead of over a million votes after tirelessly campaigning for her.

May I call the attention of the INQUIRER's editors and its readers' advocate, Lorna Kalaw-Tirol, to please analyze Cunanan's piece to see whether it adhered to fairness and objectivity.

—SAM COSTANILLA,
spokesperson,
Office of the Governor,
Province of Cebu

Clarifications about Easco

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS ITEM titled "15 insurance firms up for suspension" (INQUIRER, 5/28/07) which named our firm as among those "unable to meet the capitalization requirement."

On behalf of the Eastern Assurance and Surety Corp. (Easco), let me make the following clarification:

1. The new name of Easco is Milestone Guaranty Assurance Corp., a company registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Its Authorized Capital Stock was increased from P50 million to P100 million upon SEC's approval on April 18, 2007.

2. The stockholders paid a fresh capital infusion of P20 million to meet the P100 million statutory capital requirement under DOF Order No. 27-06.

3. However, the corporation's new name was not publicly announced due to the strong and persistent clamor of our sales people to retain the old name (Easco) which, according to them, has, since 1962, built goodwill and a respectable reputation in the industry.

4. Subsequently, recognizing the merit of their recommendation, the company is all set to file a Certificate of Amended Articles of Incorporation with the SEC.

—NORBERTO V. SAUCO,
executive vice president,
Eastern Assurance and Surety Corp,.
2654 Saygan St., Malate, Manila

The INQUIRER simply wrote the story based on what the Insurance Commission reported in a press conference held last month.

—MICHELLE V. REMO,
Inquirer reporter

Nothing wrong with PMA bloc

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE editorial titled "Sir, no, sir!" (INQUIRER, 6/10/07)

From its opening salvo—"They made it sound like it was a good thing"—the editorial immediately revealed how the INQUIRER perceived the impending "union" of PMA graduates in the Senate. It expressed concerns about such a group exercising its power to influence and act as a swing vote in the Senate. What should be of greater concern is: how the influence and swing vote would be wielded.

I would take my chances with these individuals rather than with the politicians who continue to poison our nation with their duplicity, apparent lack of principles and absence of honor. At least, these men spoke when others merely kept silent and acted when others simply wilted under the pressure of unjust and selfish governance.

The editorial said that the formation of any group within the halls of Congress would be elitist and unsound, and would be an insult to the common Filipino. This view has no basis. I agree that we should always look to our past in order to learn how to handle the future, but we should never live in it. I firmly believe that elitism only rears its ugly head when the actions and advocacies of a group become an impediment to the advancement of ordinary Filipinos. When the people elected to lead and govern us fail to deliver on that promise, whether collectively or individually, that to me is elitist.

Politicians may form all the blocs they want, and I wouldn't care if the grouping is based on school, region, faith or economic status. They can use the influence of their numbers and collective votes to preempt, pressure, prevent, prioritize or protect whatever it is that dictate or direct them; and for as long as that favors the common good, I would never see it as elitist.

The editorial also reflects narrow-mindedness, as well as shallow and short-sighted thinking. Maybe, because of this, we as a nation should really be afraid. I shudder at the thought of how some people with the power of the pen can think so superficially.

Maybe, we should reflect why Rodolfo Biazon, Gregorio Honasan, Panfilo Lacson and Antonio Trillanes IV are now in the hallowed halls of the Senate. Maybe, they speak the words ordinary Filipinos pine to hear. Maybe, they are seen to speak out when most of us would remain silent. Maybe, their actions embody what most Filipinos crave to find in our leaders. Maybe, they are the remaining voice against a truly selfish regime.

—ROMEO M. ACOP,
police director (Ret.)

A new political environment

AT THIS POINT, WE CAN SAY with certainty that the next Senate will be under the control of the opposition.

With Sen. Manny Villar as Senate president, Sen. Loren Legarda as majority floor leader and Sen. Nene Pimentel as chair of the blue ribbon committee, our people can feel more confident and safe.

With key cities in Metro Manila now in the hands of opposition mayors like Fred Lim (Manila), Jojo Binay (Makati) and Peewee Trinidad (Pasay), there is no question that the political leaders in Southern Tagalog and Metro Manila can easily assert their political preferences in the coming 2010 elections.

Eventually, even if President Macapagal-Arroyo manages to stay in Malacañang until 2010, I feel that the general sentiment of the people for change in the national leadership will become very obvious and will prevail.

Incidentally, the massive electoral fraud in Mindanao, more particularly in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Sulu, can no longer be ignored. This is the right time to file criminal cases against Comelec officials, candidates and their supporters who were party to the "electoral sabotage" and other violations of the Omnibus Election Code committed in the last elections.

—ARTURO M. TOPACIO JR.,
Dra. Salamanca cor. L. Jaena Sts.,
San Roque, Cavite City

Lawyer revives call for PCGG abolition

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE CALL FOR THE ABOLITION of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) was revived yesterday by a Malacañang official after a Quezon City court acquitted former First Lady Imelda Marcos of tax charges.

"It has outlived its purpose," presidential legal adviser Sergio Apostol said in a phone interview.

And the ax should also fall on the Philippine National Oil Corp. (PNOC), National Power Corp. (Napocor) and other nonperforming government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs), Apostol said.

"They should be abolished ... because they are not making money anymore," he said.

Apostol recalled several past studies on the abolition of the PCGG, the agency created during the Aquino administration to go after the ill-gotten assets of the Marcoses, their relatives and cronies.

"All these studies fizzled out," he said.

Apostol belied allegations Malacañang had something to do with the acquittal of Imelda Marcos on Wednesday by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court on five counts of Tax Code violations due to the prosecution's failure to establish criminal intent.

"There was no deal," he said in Filipino and English. "If there was a negotiation, the trial should not have proceeded. But the trial was finished and a decision was issued."

Apostol pointed out it was the Bureau of Internal Revenue that "decided to pursue this [case] so there's no reason to think this was part of any deal."

Apostol admitted, however, that President Macapagal-Arroyo had been reaching out to her critics, including the Marcoses, as part of her overarching goal of national reconciliation in the post-election period.

"But if a case has basis, it should not be negotiated," he said.

Asked if the President would order the BIR to seek a reconsideration of the ruling, Apostol said the revenue agency would "automatically" appeal it.

"We will lose a lot. Yes, the government should fight it out through the BIR," he said.

He said corporations that were sequestered for being part of the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses and which had been cleared of encumbrances by the courts should be sold.

"Nobody is claiming them, so they should be disposed of. That's the PCGG mandate," he said.

As for GOCCs, "like the PNOC—three of [its] subsidiaries are not making money—they should be absorbed instead (by the appropriate departments)," Apostol, ironically a former PNOC president, said.

"There's a law I heard that is proposing the abolition of Napocor. It should be abolished or privatized," he said.

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Akbayan solons take up cudgels for breastfeeding

By Leila B. Salaverria

TAKING THE CUDGELS FOR breastfeeding advocates, Akbayan Representatives Etta Rosales and Risa Hontiveros-Baraquiel yesterday asked the Supreme Court to dismiss the suit seeking a halt to the implementation of the milk code, which among others prohibits the advertisement of infant formula.

Raising a possible conflict-of-interest issue, Rosales and Baraquiel expressed concern about Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera's impending defense of the Department of Health's milk code.

They pointed out that the Department of Trade and Industry had written Devanadera to consider the case's impact on trade, investment, employment and other commercial activities of the milk companies in the country. They also said that the United States Chamber of Commerce had asked the DTI to reexamine the revised implementing rules of the milk code, including the advertising ban.

"(We) have every reason to believe that the Solicitor General's representation of DOH in this case will be, albeit unintended, either restrained or compromised because of a clear 'conflict of interests' between DOH and DTI," Rosales and Baraquiel said in their comment filed yesterday.

Rosales said Devanadera was suffering from a "schizophrenic condition" because of the opposing positions of the DOH and the DTI. But she added that if Devanadera had been a breastfeeding mother, she would have known which side to pick.

The DOH, represented by the solicitor general, and the Pharmaceutical and Health Care Association of the Philippines (PHAP) are scheduled to hold oral arguments on the milk code case on June 19.

The Supreme Court, upon the PHAP's petition, earlier ordered a temporary halt to the implementation of the milk code's rules, which include the ban on the advertising, promotion or marketing of materials and activities for breast milk substitutes intended for infants and children up to two years old.

The PHAP had opposed the rules, saying they would stop the free flow of information about the nutritional content of infant formula and would hinder mothers from learning about proper infant feeding, thus putting babies' lives at risk.

But the DOH said the milk code was important because its implementing rules were intended to prevent infants' deaths. It said the rules were intended to regulate the manufacturers and distributors of infant formula and breast milk substitutes that make false claims that their products could make children more intelligent, thus undermining the breastfeeding culture.

In supporting the DOH stand, Rosales and Baraquiel said advertising was the means by which the milk companies propagated their claims, and this should be stopped. They said mothers were persuaded by statements from the companies that their milk could give babies better vision, higher IQs and stronger immune systems.

"Although these claims have only been observed to hold in breast milk, claims of infant formula manufacturers are nevertheless more persuasive simply because the claims are transmitted with absolute persistence," they said.

The lawmakers also said medical and scientific research had shown that children who were not breast-fed were more likely to be malnourished and thus more prone to disease or death. They said the dire effects of non-breastfeeding would have been avoided if the advertisements of breast-milk substitutes were controlled as the milk code's rules intended.

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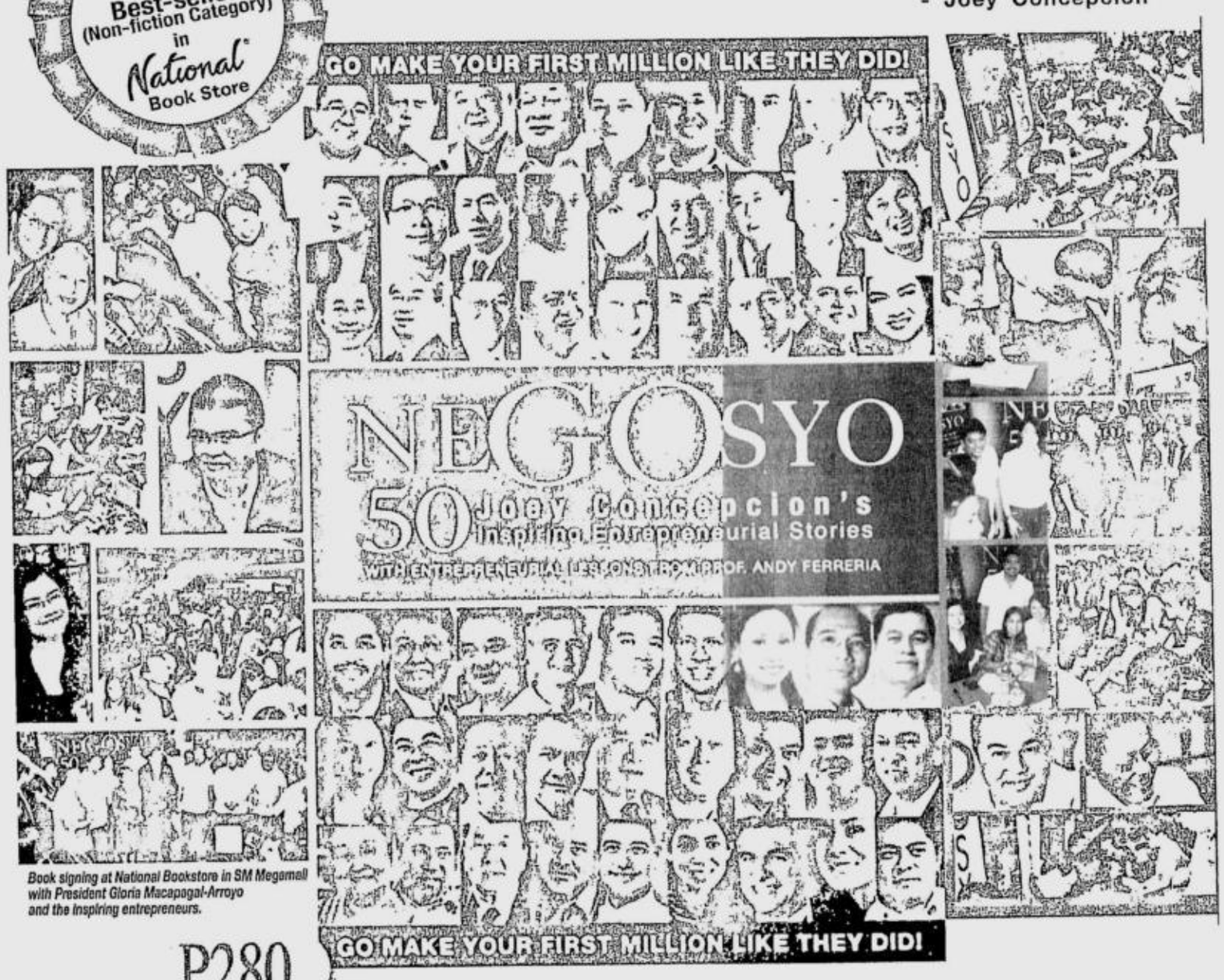

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, June 15, 2007
Sacred Heart of Jesus

1st Reading: Ezk 34:11-16
2nd Reading: Rom 5:5-11
Gospel: Luke 15:3-7

Jesus told them this parable, "Who among you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, will not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and seek out the lost one till he finds it? And finding it, will he not joyfully carry it home on his shoulders? Then he will call his friends and neighbors together and say: 'Celebrate with me for I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, just so, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine upright who do not need to repent."

Commentary

Jesus is the Shepherd who tends the sheep, rescuing them, gathering them together, leading them home, pasturing them, protecting them, and giving them rest/peace. He seeks out the lost, forgiving, bringing back the stray, binding the injured, but destroying the sleek and the strong—shepherding all with justice. This is the love of the heart of God in Jesus.

This love has been shared with us in the life/death/resurrection of Jesus. God is not/has not ever been wrathful even when we have been inhuman. All we have known is God's reconciliation and mercy in Jesus the Lord. We have each been the one lost and straying that has been brought back to the other sheep—so that we could all be one again in God. The Shepherd wants to keep us all together. The heart of Jesus seeks to bring us all into the fullness of God, the Trinity, so that we might dwell as one.

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Records of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) reveal that the following lawyers have not updated their membership dues for three (3) consecutive years or more, as of June 13, 2007:

You are hereby given a period of seven (7) days from today, or until June 22, 2007, to update your membership dues. Otherwise, without further notice, IBP will initiate proceedings to drop you from the roll of attorneys. If you have already updated your membership dues, kindly disregard this notice.

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MONTEMAYOR, ANTONIO F
MONTERO, JR. FELIZARDO S.
MURILLO, JR. AR

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NICOLANDIA

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EASTERN VISAYAS

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WESTERN VISAYAS

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Pangasinan suffers 10-hr outage, but told it's OK

DAGUPAN CITY—THIS CITY AND four Pangasinan towns went through a 10-hour power outage on Thursday, disrupting operations in many offices and business establishments here.

But the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) assured residents here and in the towns of Calasiao, Sta. Barbara, Binmaley and San Fabian that the day-long power outage, which began at 8 a.m., was meant to prevent power interruptions in the future.

"This is just one of our scheduled regular maintenance works for the year to improve our service," said Gerry Torres, manager of the Transco western Pangasinan branch in Labrador town.

This will be the second 10-hour power outage this year to give way to maintenance, according to August Sarmiento, operations manager of the Dagupan Electric Corp., whose franchise areas were hurt by the power interruption.

Torres said that aside from checking joints of their transmission lines stretching from Labrador to Calasiao, they also have to change old wooden poles with concrete or steel posts in certain areas.

Aging poles

He said about 40 percent of the electric poles in the Labrador-to-Calasiao stretch were erected in the 1970s.

"We also have to tighten some bolts and nuts in our substations' terminal pads and ensure the readiness of our facilities for the coming rainy season," he said.

This, he said, included the setting up of arresters to minimize the chance of their electric posts being hit by lightning.

At the city hall here, transactions slowed down despite the use of a generator to power up lighting in some offices. The generator power was not enough to run office computers.

At least one review center here cancelled its class for the day. Banks, however, were open as these were equipped with generators.

In Laoag City, the local power cooperative is considering whether or not to continue buying power from the wholesale electricity spot market (Wesm) following price surges in the electricity that Wesm traded in May.

The Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative has been flooded with consumers' complaints after power bills of residential users suddenly escalated last month.

No choice

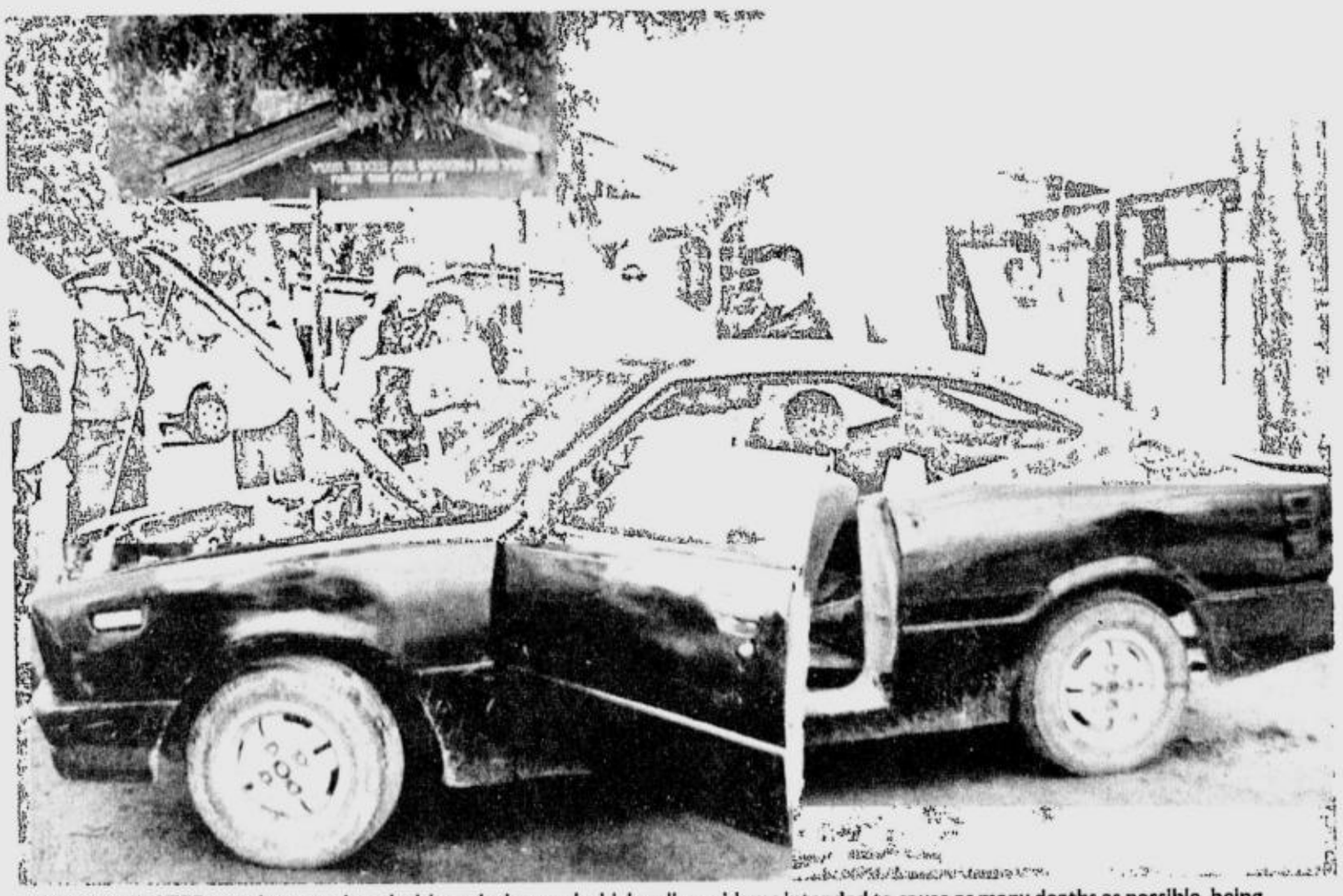
Clemencia Cariaga, Inec's member-services department manager, said the coop was forced to charge high power bills from its consumers because Wesm power rates ballooned from P8/kwh in April to P9.5218/kwh last month. The Wesm rate in March was only P5.936/kwh.

Inec, a distribution utility, buys its power supply, which it feeds to consumers from Wesm, the National Power Corp., the Northwind Power Development Corp., (which produces power from wind turbines) and the cooperative-run mini hydro electric plant. From the four sources of power, Wesm had the highest power price in May.

Gabriel Cardinoza and Cristina Arzadon, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Police tag terror suspect out on bail in plot to use car bomb

SURALLAH, SOUTH COTABATO—Police authorities said they had identified a bomb expert linked to the Jemaah Islamiyah as one of two men seen abandoning the car bomb here early Wednesday.



THE DILAPIDATED car, that was rigged with explosives and which police said was intended to cause as many deaths as possible, being inspected by investigators in Surallah, South Cotabato. US experts helped inspect the second car bomb believed put together by militants with links to international terrorist groups.

JEOFFREY MAITEM/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Supt. Roberto Kiunisala, provincial police chief, said witnesses told law enforcers that one of the men had an amputated arm—which fitted the description of Edris Sabal.

"A witness told our investigators that one the two men who left the 1977 Toyota sedan here around 5 a.m. Wednesday had only one arm," he said.

Kiunisala said Sabal lost his right arm when the bomb he was about to plant in a crowded area in Koronadal City prematurely went off in 2003.

He was also the main suspect in the May 8 bombing in Tacurong City that killed eight people, including several children.

The car, packed with mortar shells, nails, TNT and black powder attached to a battery-operated timer, was abandoned at the town's busiest intersection.

US help

Members of the police's ordnance and explosives unit, aided by US bomb experts, later disarmed the bomb. Authorities said the bomb was so powerful that it could kill many people had it exploded.

US and Filipino bomb experts agreed that the composition of the bomb was something new although a similar car bomb was recovered in Maguindanao two months ago.

Kiunisala said Sabal belonged to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), an allegation denied by the group's spokesperson.

"He belongs to the MILF. And he has links with militants like the JI and Abu Sayyaf. He came from Maguindanao and he is targeting key cities in the region. We have tightened the security to prevent any attacks," he said.

Irresponsible

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, described Kiunisala's statement as irresponsible.

"He is not a member of our organization. But he has relatives with the organization," he said.

Kabalu said Sabal had already been arrested but was freed on bail.

"Several years ago, he was involved in the bombing in General Santos City. In fact, he was arrested by the police and the military but was able to post bail. Authorities know that," he said.

He urged authorities to be more circumspect, citing the result of the investigation on the June 8 blast at the Matalam bus terminal.

Kabalu said that shortly after the explosion, which injured 10 people, police immediately blamed "rogue MILF members with ties to JI" as the culprits.

"We already said we have no rogue members. No less than (Federal Bureau of Investigation) agents helping in the investigation said it was not a terror attack," he said.

FBI agents had said the bomb was the work of "amateurs."

Continuing threats

In Cotabato City, Eddie Soledad, manager of Weena Bus Co., said the firm continued to receive threats from an extortion group.

A letter signed by a certain Barumbado was sent to them after the explosion, warning of more explosions if the company failed to give P2 million in protection money, he said.

Soledad said the management decided to cut the number of air conditioned buses plying the Cotabato-Davao route from 30 to only 10.

North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol said he directed police authorities to deploy plainclothes agents inside the buses to help protect passengers. *Jeoffrey Maitem with reports from Charlie Señase and Edwin Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

Albay governor says he sees overprice in dredging

HUNDREDS of families continue to make their home the schools of some areas in Albay despite billions of pesos being spent on dredging and other projects supposedly for victims of typhoons and flooding in the province.

NINO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

LEGAZPI CITY—ALBAY GOV. FERNANDO GONzalez has questioned as "likely overpriced" the multimillion-peso dredging and earth-diking projects in the province and the P20-million repair of the city airport by the Department of Public Works and Highways.

The DPWH-Bicol has 67 ongoing initial rehabilitation projects in Albay amounting to more than P1.4 billion.

A total of P655 million, the biggest share, was allotted for 30 projects of dredging, river-channelization, and earth-dike construction in three districts, a report furnished the governor by the DPWH stated.

Other projects involved the repair, improvement, and construction of roads amounting to P581 million; reconstruction and replacement of bridges, P74.8 million; and rehabilitation of dikes and river control facilities, P79 million.

Gonzalez said he was against the dredging activities since they only offered temporary solutions to lahar and flooding hazards around Mt. Mayon.

"What we need are permanent flood-control facilities and not dredging and collapsible earth-dikes, which will all be useless when heavy rains come," he said.

He added that the wise spending of public funds by the DPWH should be a question to ask by the public since "the amounts allotted for the projects were incredible."

Cost of dredging and earth-diking projects ranged from P4 million to P40 million.

Based on records obtained by Gonzalez as to the status of the projects as of April 25, a dredging project in San Francisco River Channel, Guinobatan, Albay, was 75.8 percent completed, with the whole programmed amount of P30.1 million released already.

It was a negotiated contract, meaning there was no bidding.

Another project is the rehabilitation and rechannelization of Lower Padang Earthdike in Padang, this city, under a negotiated contract worth P28.5 million. Some P30 million was released as of April 25, with 36.5-percent completion.

Still another project was the P28.5-million rechannelling of Yawa River under a negotiated contract. As of April 25, it was 34.69-percent completed.

Orlando Roces, DPWH regional director in Bicol, told the INQUIRER that the dredging activities were necessary and were even recommended by the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council and the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

"Some people doubt if we are doing the right thing, but we first had to remove the volcanic debris deposited in the rivers and redefine river channels before we could put up solid structures like permanent flood-control facilities," Roces said.

He added that the DPWH had to identify the "weak points" of the river channels that could collapse. These will be where the permanent flood-control structures will be built, he said.

Roces said the amount allotted for dredging was reasonable and depended on the length and width of the rivers, and the volume of debris deposits. *Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Protesting workers threaten to paralyze power plant

By Delfin Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—PROTESTING workers from the 735-megawatt coal-fired Mirant power plant in Pagbilao town warned that should management continued to ignore their demand for separation pay, they would be forced to paralyze plant operations that could cause widespread blackout in the entire Luzon.

"Once the other power plants servicing Luzon grid could not cope with the demands, the resulting domino effect could trigger total brownout in the entire Luzon area," Ogie Abalos, spokesperson of the Kaisahan ng Manggagawa sa Pagbilao Power Station (KMPPS), told the INQUIRER.

He added that the workers were ready to face the consequences of their protest action. "Negotiation is over. They already ignored us. Now is the time for us to act to protect our collective interest as workers."

He said once Mirant executives again ignored the workers demands, the plant operation would be paralyzed starting Monday.

Mirant power production accounts for at least 23 percent of the electric demands of the entire Luzon grid, according to Abalos.

At least 200 plant workers—technicians, office staff members and laborers—staged a protest action at the plant gate in Barangay Ibabang Polo at about 7:30 a.m. yesterday.

Earlier, the workers all wore white shirts printed with "Magkaisa Para sa Kinabukasan ng Lahat" in front and "2.5" at the back, on board several vehicles and motorcycles. They mounted a 35-kilometer motorcade from Pagbilao town proper to the plant gate.

Teodoro Gener, KMPPS president, in a statement disclosed that on Dec. 11, 2006, Mirant entered into a sale and purchase agreement with Crimsonpower Holdings Co. Inc., a joint venture between Tokyo Electric Power Co. (Tepco) and Marubeni Corp.

While the agreement deals with the sale of the controlling interest only of Mirant to the Japanese firms, he claimed that in reality, the contract was a sale of the entire business of Mirant to another entity that would now own its business and facilities.

The company has insisted that there would be no termination of employment so there was no need for them to pay separation benefits.

In a letter from Crimsonpower dated June 12 and addressed to all power plant employees, the Japanese company maintained that "at the completion of the sale, Mirant Philippines, Mirant Pagbilao and Mirant Sual will continue to be your employer."

The INQUIRER tried to contact Joey Leviste, Mirant chair and chief executive officer, through his mobile phone but it just kept on ringing.

According to Mirant, the company was sold for a price of $3.4 billion, plus working capital.

Saudi burial for OFW adds grief to family

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

GUAGUA, PAMPANGA—THE APPEALS BY the wife and children of beheaded overseas worker Reynaldo Cortez to Philippine authorities to bring home his remains from Saudi Arabia went to naught on Thursday.

Esteban Conejos, foreign undersecretary for migrant affairs, has informed Cortez's wife Melody by phone that "in respect of laws and customs in Saudi Arabia, a convict after his execution must be immediately buried in an unmarked grave."

"We cannot repatriate his remains. I do not think we can bring home the body," Conejos later confirmed to the INQUIRER.

Asked if that was on account of him being a convert to Islam, Conejos said it was more because of the laws and burial custom for convicts in that Middle East kingdom.

After the call by Conejos, Melody left the veranda, walked inside the family's 4 x 3 meter house, slumped on a plastic chair and withdrew into silence in front of an altar where her six children had lit thin white candles beside the four photographs of their father.

Wake

It appeared to be the closest thing they could do to approximate a wake for him.

Cortez, 41, was beheaded by sword in a Riyadh jail last Wednesday for the murder of a Pakistani taxi driver who reportedly tried to rape him in 2001.

Melody, 37, held back words and tears. She reclined her head on her left hand, as sadness and rage showed through her face.

Stunned by news of not being able to see their father even on his death, Cortez's children—Girlie, 18; April, 17; the twins Allan and Allen, 14; and Ace, 8—stared hard at their father's photographs. Alfie, the eldest, slept his sadness away.

Tough question

Girlie broke the silence by asking, "Are we not really going to be able to bury him here?"

Melody gave no answer. An hour before Conejos broke the news she said she wanted his remains sent home so his children could have time to pay their last respects to him.

In the cramped sala, April let out a painful truth. "We waited for him for nine years and we can't get to even see his body?" she said.

Throughout the waiting, Cortez had stayed in touch with them occasionally by calling them through borrowed mobile phones.

He last called them on June 10 to check on April's health. Ace, the youngest, had never seen his father in person. He was still in his mother's womb when Cortez left in 1998 to work as a welder in a car workshop.

The stabbing happened on May 12, 2001, when Cortez was finished with his contract and was bound for home, Melody said. Since then, she has single-handedly raised the children by selling rice and clothes.

Answers

To April's query, Melody said: "We will still try."

Earlier that morning though, at around 8 a.m., she got assurances from Mayor Ricardo Rivera that the DFA, on the requests of Malacañang and President Macapagal-Arroyo's son, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo, would exert efforts to repatriate the remains.

Migrante International Chair Connie Bragas-Regalado said that the call by Conejos to Melody made it clear that the family's appeals have gone futile.

Regalado said Migrante was taking the case to the international human rights community to "seek justice" for Cortez.

Melody maintained that her husband was innocent and that he stabbed the victim to death out of self-defense.

Conejos said the DFA tried every means to save Cortez from the death row since 2005. But Regalado said the government had not fully explored negotiations with the Saudi Arabia monarchy.

"(The DFA) got stuck on offering blood money or asking for forgiveness. It was afraid to strain diplomatic relations (with Saudi Arabia) in consideration of the opportunities in the labor market," she said.

"*Ang* feeling *ni* Rey *pinabayaan siya ng gobyerno* (He felt that the government neglected him)," Melody said of her husband's views before the execution. The date was not announced, she added.

When the death sentence was read, Cortez claimed the Philippine Embassy sent no lawyers to help him, Regalado recalled of Cortez's text messages to her.

The death of Cortez, she said, should serve as a "wake-up call" to the government in terms of protecting distressed migrant workers. The DFA said 33 are on the death row in the Middle East countries.

Cortez's execution came in the same month the government observed Migrants Month.

"The government passed into law the Magna Carta for Overseas Workers (Republic Act No. 8042) after Flor's (Contemplacion) death by hanging in 1995. That is supposed to ensure their protection, if implemented," Regalado said.

RELATIVES, friends and members of Migrante International held a noise barrage for Marilou Ranorio, a Filipino migrant worker on death row in Kuwait. Relatives of other OFWs on death row in Saudi Arabia joined the noise barrage. JOAN BONDOC

Group eyes Cory family hacienda in SC decision

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE SUPREME Court decision that sugar lands remained within the coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) should speed up the distribution of lands within the Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas said.

The 6,453-hectare Hacienda Luisita is a sugar estate owned by the family of former President Corazon Aquino.

The ruling, made on March 30 and posted on the court's website on Monday, "should pave the way for the hastening of sugar lands to farm workers like that in Hacienda Luisita, Hacienda Velez-Malaga and other sugar plantations which have been tightly guarded by landlords against distribution," Danilo Ramos, KMP secretary general, said in a statement here.

Social justice, he said, must be "served and land monopoly should be smashed." *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

ANY SPECIAL ELECTIONS MUST BE MEANINGFUL, TRUTHFUL AND FREE!

The Comelec must take all steps necessary to uphold and protect the right to vote of the people of Maguindanao. We believe there is strong evidence to support the finding that there was probably a failure of elections in Maguindanao or that elections did not take place in many areas in the province. Should Comelec call for special elections, it must ensure that the elections are meaningful, truthful, and free.

Any special elections will require, among other steps, measures to address the lack of credibility of local Comelec officials. The loss of the certificates of canvass in their custody, documents which are crucial to prove that elections did take place in the province, has put their competence, independence, and integrity into grave doubt. Even if all the documents later show up intact, they can only be treated with great suspicion of having been altered and manipulated.

Special elections will also require steps to address the climate of fear and insecurity, which prevails in the province. The recent killing of a Maguindanao teacher, allegedly for exposing electoral fraud in his municipality, has only served to heighten this fear and insecurity, especially among teachers in the province. The situation is not helped by the fact that hundreds of firearms have reportedly been issued to paramilitary units under the control of provincial officials led by Governor Ampatuan, and exempted from the Comelec gun ban.

Meaningful, truthful and free elections cannot be held in Maguindanao under these circumstances. Rather, it can only take place if the following steps are taken by the Comelec, the PNP/AFP and the government, as the case may be:

a. Cancel all gun permits, disarm the paramilitary units in the province and dismantle all vestiges of any machinery for electoral manipulation
b. Deploy units of the Philippine Marines throughout the province to ensure peace and order, including the safety of the voters, election officials and citizen volunteers
c. Replace local Comelec officials with trusted Comelec personnel from other areas
d. Count ballots in safe and secure areas
e. Ensure the effective participation of Comelec citizens arms and full media coverage of the elections, and
f. Undertake adequate voter's education activities before the elections.

If the Comelec decides to hold special elections, the people of Maguindanao should be able to exercise their right to vote free of violence or threats thereof, or of retribution or of manipulative interference of any kind.

Finally, as soon as the elections are over, the Comelec and the government must act swiftly to hold all those who have committed violations of election laws, including members of the Comelec itself, administratively and criminally accountable.

The Comelec also owes the public an explanation as to why those officials with a cloud of suspicion on wholesale fraud in 2004 were not removed or transferred from their positions in such places as Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur, in the interest of prudent and effective management.

The Comelec and the government have an opportunity to help restore the trustworthiness of the electoral process by making an example of Maguindanao. We earnestly urge them to vigorously pursue this course and offer our services, together with our partners, in helping attain this objective.

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Cops want to give to poor rice linked to poll fraud

IMUS, CAVITE—THE PROVINCIAL POLICE director has asked the provincial prosecutor on Tuesday for permission to dispose of more than 1,000 sacks of rice that a losing congressional candidate allegedly intended to use to buy votes in the May 14 polls.

In his petition, Senior Supt. Fidel Posadas said he feared that the thousands of kilograms of rice would only be left rotten if they would not be disposed of properly in the next few days.

He admitted that his office lacked the facility and space to properly keep the confiscated rice.

The sacks of rice are still loaded on a six-wheel dump truck allegedly used by outgoing Bacoor Mayor Jessie Castillo's men to distribute the items to voters. The truck remains impounded at Camp General Pantaleon Garcia here.

Castillo, who lost in the congressional race against reelectionist Rep. Joseph Emilio Abaya, denied the allegations.

He accused Posadas and his men of harassing him and his supporters to favor Strike Revilla, who won over the mayor's wife Minerva in Bacoor.

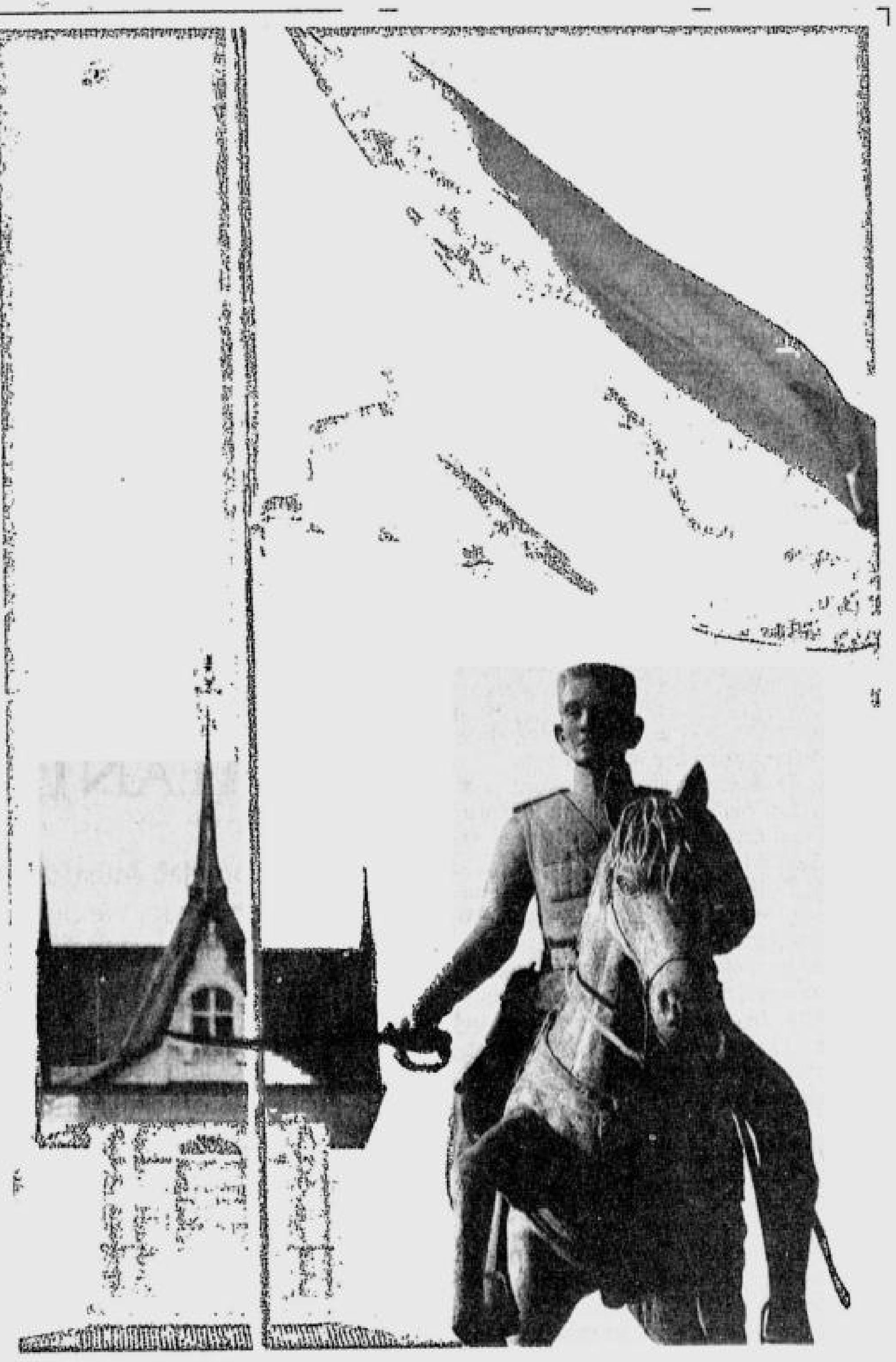
"I think it would be better if we start distributing the rice to charitable institutions. In that way, we can help more people than just leave it to the molds," Posadas told the INQUIRER in an interview on Tuesday.

Posadas expressed optimism that the case against Castillo would prosper in court after the provincial prosecutor's office forwarded the police complaint of electioneering against Castillo to the Office of the Ombudsman.

He said two witnesses had admitted that they received rice rations from Castillo in exchange for their votes.

"We have enough evidence against Mayor Castillo to prove that he used the rice to buy votes in the elections," he said. "We also expect the Ombudsman to release a warrant of arrest regarding this case."

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon



ROGER MARGALLO

INDEPENDENCE
A Philippine flag flies near a statue of Emilio Aguinaldo, who declared Philippine independence on June 12, 1898, in Kawit, Cavite. Kawit has been a secondary site of Independence Day celebrations.

Gunmen bomb 8th power transmission tower in Mindanao

ILIGAN CITY—UNIDENTIFIED ARMED MEN bombed yet another tower of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco), the eighth such structure attacked in Mindanao since March.

Avelino Dawis, a department manager of Transco here, said the latest target was tower No. 48 in Bong-bong, Lanao del Sur that connected the Abaga line in Baloi, Lanao del Norte to the Kibawe line in Bukidnon.

Dawis said the latest attack, the second this week, occurred 10 p.m. on Wednesday.

On Tuesday evening, a Transco tower in Barangay Pagayawan in Bacolod Lanao del Norte was also bombed by unidentified perpetrators.

SPO4 Myrna Dejos, acting chief of the Bacolod police, said the perpetrators tied four 60-mm mortar shells to the steel tower but only two went off.

In both attacks, Dawis said only some areas suffered from power disruptions. Power in other areas was uninterrupted.

Dawis said if a steel tower suffers a major damage, Transco has to replace it, which costs more than P1 million.

"But if a toppled tower is reconstructed using existing materials, it will cost more than P500,000 excluding labor," he said.

Asked who could be behind the attacks on Transco towers, Dawis said they could be extortionists.

He said they have been receiving extortion letters, which Transco management have been ignoring for years.

Dawis said the latest was the one sent by a Commander Mubarak, who was asking P5 million in protection money per month.

But he said Mubarak did not mention which group he belongs to.

In the past, rebel leaders identified with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) have ordered attacks on power lines because of the government's alleged failure to compensate Maranaos for the use of Lake Lanao and the Maria Cristina Falls here.

The government's hydropower facilities, which supplies about 90 percent of Mindanao's power needs, are powered by water from Lake Lanao and Maria Cristina. *Richel Umel, Inquirer Mindanao*

Cops sue Roxas City-based recruiter for bogus jobs

By Felipe V. Celino
Inquirer Visayas

ROXAS CITY—THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGAtion and Detection Group (CIDG) filed illegal recruitment and estafa charges against a travel agency that allegedly duped four persons who were promised work in Macau.

Roma Travel and Tours Agency (RTTA), with an office on Magallanes Street here, was accused of facilitating the departure of the three recruits to Macau after they paid "placement" fees ranging from P50,000 to P75,000, according to the complaint filed by the CIDG at the city prosecutor's office yesterday.

However, they later learned that not only were there no jobs waiting for them in Macau, but they had to return home empty-handed because their tickets were already about to expire. They had entered the former Portuguese colony as tourists.

Lawyer Daniel Cartageña, who represented RTTA, said in radio interviews that RTTA was a travel agency and not a recruitment agency. He said the agency did not promise jobs.

He said the applicants went to Macau as tourists and had the opportunity to look for jobs. The amounts paid by its clients were for their passports and lodging in Macau, he said.

It was the clients' responsibility to look for jobs there, he said.

Named respondents in the complaint were Mandie Doromal, registered owner of RTTA; his branch manager Maria Cristina Mojar; and staff member Arlene Padual, according to CIDG investigator SPO4 William Limjuco.

Name change

RTTA has since been renamed Far East Discovery Travel and Tours and moved its office from Magallanes Street to Roxas Avenue, the CIDG said.

The CIDG conducted the investigation based on the complaint filed by Jay Palalimpa, 27, of Poblacion Norte; Claudette Catibayan, 27, of Barangay Cudian; and Hadassah Aizza Rivera, 20, of Poblacion Sur, all of Ivisan, Capiz; and Nerlevic Vidal, 25, of Barangay Tanque, Roxas City.

Rivera said Mojar and Padual convinced her to work in Macau supposedly as a front desk officer of Mandarin Hotel and asked her to pay P75,000 in placement fee.

She paid the fee in three installments before she left for Macau on board Macau Airways on Nov. 14, 2006. With her was Catibayan, who had paid P50,000 with the promise to pay the remaining P25,000 from her salary there.

Rivera said she and Catibayan stayed at Doromal's house in Chico Dulo, Las Piñas City while waiting for their departure.

They were met at the Macau airport by Denver Bustalino and a certain "Kuya Bivian" who were from Cebu City, Rivera said. The two were also recruited by RTTA, she said.

Gov willing to shed light on elections

COTABATO CITY—MAGUINDAnao Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan and other elected local officials are willing to show up before the National Board of Canvassers, his spokesperson said yesterday.

Norie Unas, who is also the provincial administrator, told the INQUIRER that Ampatuan and the other officials were also willing to shed light on the issue of fraud that allegedly took place in Maguindanao during the May 14 balloting.

The controversy was sparked by the 12-0 sweep of the Team Unity ticket in the senatorial elections and zero votes for at least 19 senatorial candidates.

Some teachers, who served as members of the board of election inspectors, claimed that no elections took place in the province and that armed men filled out ballots on behalf of the administration slate.

The claim was denied by Ampatuan and other provincial officials, saying the TU sweep was the result of consultation with residents.

Ampatuan's camp has said that in Maguindanao, command votes exist.

The controversy deepened when election documents to prove that elections indeed took place went missing.

Lintang Bedol, provincial elections supervisor, said the documents had been stolen from the provincial capitol in Shariff Aguak, which was heavily guarded, but he could not say how.

Unas said Ampatuan was willing to shed light on the controversy but that the governor was only waiting for the advice of his lawyers.

"We would like to clear all gray areas during the past polls. We are still conferring with our lawyers," Unas said.

Asked if Ampatuan would attend Friday's hearing of the election controversy, Unas said it might not happen yet.

Lawyers will represent Ampatuan and other officials when the Comelec resumes its investigation of the alleged Maguindanao poll fraud, he said.

Unas said the governor had yet to receive the Comelec summons. "We only hear about it from the media," he said.

He reiterated that elections took place in the province and that it had been the most peaceful political exercise in years.

"As far as the elected officials are concerned, they believe they were legally elected and proclaimed," Unas said.

Police have formed a task force that will look into the June 9 murder of Maguindanao school supervisor Musa Dimasidsing.

Dimasidsing was one of those who signed a statement about election fraud in Pagalungan town. He was shot dead by unidentified armed men outside his home in Pikit, North Cotabato on Saturday. *Inquirer Mindanao*

Trillanes to probe AFP death squads

From page A1

jective of the planned inquiry.

"We should look at such an investigation as an opportunity to clear the [AFP] ... The allegation that it is behind these killings has been putting the AFP in a bad light," he said.

Trillanes said sweeping statements blaming the military for the political killings and forced disappearances were unfair because those in the "regular uniformed units" did not agree with "this kind of work."

He said the so-called "death squads" or special teams assigned to carry out political killings and abductions were usually "composite teams" run by the intelligence community, including intelligence units from each major service command.

"These teams are above the regular units. If ever, they are utilized on a case-by-case basis," he said.

Oplan Greenbase

Trillanes said he would also seek an inquiry into the supposed involvement of the Arroyo administration in sowing terror in Mindanao, as alleged in the Oplan Greenbase document he exposed at the height of the Oakwood mutiny in July 2003.

The document supposedly provides a detailed account of why even mosques were being bombed in Mindanao.

"She (Ms Arroyo) is responsible for causing war in Mindanao," said Trillanes, who campaigned on an "impeach-GMA" platform.

He said the Oplan Greenbase document would likewise explain why he got high votes in the Muslim areas in Mindanao: "We have raised the issue with them; they know where I stand."

According to Trillanes, "not one group can claim credit" for his good showing in the senatorial elections.

He denied a military report naming the leftist Kongreso ng Pagkakaisa ng Manggagawa sa Pilipinas (KPMP) as crucial in ensuring his victory.

"The KPMP may have helped, and also the Black and White Movement, the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, civil society, the urban poor groups, the labor sector, my classmates, my family, my in-laws, and even my children," he said, adding:

"My base is really the military, both active and retired, and their families, and extended families."

Planned candidacy

Trillanes also said that contrary to the popular notion that he ran unprepared, his candidacy was planned.

He said he had his former classmates at the Asian Institute of Management conduct pre-election surveys on his chances.

The results of a survey conducted on April 10-12 showed him ranked No. 9 in the National Capital Region, Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog. He said he was ranked No. 13 in the overall national survey.

Trillanes said the survey also showed that he was preferred by male (49 percent) than female (34 percent) voters, and by voters aged 36 and older.

"We did our homework. It was not a complete shot in the dark," he said.

Trillanes chided the AFP leadership for attributing his victory to a "Left-Right conspiracy"—the same scenario raised by the military to explain the withdrawal of support that Brig. Gen. Danny Lim and several other senior officers had purportedly planned in February 2006 to oust President Arroyo.

He said AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon simply refused to read the "clamor for change" that the troops expressed by voting for him.

"They are still insisting, still trying to find an excuse ... They are still in the denial stage," Trillanes said.

People gave us the blessing

In yesterday's interview with reporters, Trillanes said he won in the senatorial race because he was "there at the right time."

He said he was unsure that he would end up victorious, and was now "relieved" that the wait and the accompanying stress were over.

"It has not sunk in yet, so maybe in the next few days it will," he said in explaining what he felt when he heard the news that he would be proclaimed senator today.

Trillanes said only his mother and brothers would come with him to witness his proclamation at the Commission on Elections office in Intramuros, Manila. He said his wife was in Australia attending a study program, and his children were now in school.

Asked if he was feeling vindicated, Trillanes said his victory was "a vindication" for the Magdalo group that mounted the Oakwood mutiny.

"The people gave us the blessing, not necessarily for [our] specific actions, but at least we can be very sure that they are fully behind us in terms of what we fought for and stand for," he said.

He added that what his group had fought for then was a clean government, and that this was what he would fight for now as a lawmaker.

Not to grab power

According to Trillanes, the Magdalo soldiers did not mount the mutiny to grab power but only to air their grievances.

"If we really wanted to grab the seat of government, we would have gone straight to Malacañang. We had the weapons to do that, but precisely, that was not the way we wanted it. We did not want to kill fellow soldiers; we did not want the people to be scared of us. We just wanted to air our grievances and the corruption in government," he said in a mixture of English and Filipino.

He also said he and his colleagues did not turn their backs on the rule of law, and actually went to jail and "subjected ourselves to the rule of law."

People's support

"The past six years, we did not cheat, we did not commit extrajudicial killings, we did not engage in any corruption in government," he said.

Asked to explain why the people did not rally behind the Magdalo soldiers during the mutiny but were now supporting them, as shown by the votes he received in the senatorial elections, Trillanes said he believed that at that time, the people "did not see what we saw—the kind of President we have."

He expressed the hope that his move to run for the Senate would serve as "an inspiration" to those who wanted to do right. He said they should not to be discouraged "because the people will support [them]."

AFP's 'bad boy' can ...

From page A1

pine National Police and a 1971 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, is amused at the thought that the mutiny leader will get a chance to order the military brass around in Senate hearings.

"If he becomes chairman of the defense committee, of course he can summon [Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes] Esperon to appear under pain of being cited for contempt," Lacson said.

Retired Army Lt. Gen. Raul Urgello (PMA Class '66) said the military brass had every reason to be concerned that the former rebel officer managed to get elected to the Senate even under detention.

"They are afraid of Trillanes because once he is a senator, he will be in a position of high influence. Suppose he sits in the Commission on Appointments [or] in the budget committee?" said Urgello, a former Army chief.

"The next group of officers will have to go through the grind of facing the Commission on Appointments. Suppose Trillanes is there? We don't know if he is vindictive. There might be something he knows. Suppose he will sit in the blue ribbon committee?" Urgello said.

'He's a fighter'

Urgello is among the retired generals who formed the Bantay Boto election watchdog group.

He said the majority of soldiers supported Trillanes by voting for him despite a "silent campaign" by the AFP leadership against the latter's candidacy.

Urgello admitted that while some retired generals had denounced the Oakwood mutiny mounted by Trillanes and his colleagues in PMA Class '95, they backed his run for the Senate.

"*Palaban kasi ito* (He's a fighter). Of course we don't support what he did in Oakwood, but this [election] is a legal process," Urgello said.

He said the soldiers' vote for Trillanes was "more than a protest vote" and "might be an indictment of the leadership."

Military club

Lacson is looking forward to having a fourth PMA member in the Senate, and had earlier suggested that they form a "Cavaliers Club."

The other ex-military men in the Senate are Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former AFP chief of staff and member of PMA Class '61, and Senator-elect Gregorio Honasan, a former coup leader and member of PMA Class '71.

Lacson had also earlier suggested that the Makati Regional Trial Court hearing Trillanes' coup d'etat case might make a special exception and allow the latter to be turned over to Senate custody so he could attend to his duties.

Otherwise, "he can conduct hearings in Fort Bonifacio, being the [committee] chairman, and we can go there as members," said Lacson.

Discomfort

Indeed, the victory of its "bad boy" has put the military in a bind.

Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino, chief of the AFP National Capital Region Command, yesterday said the military was in an "uncomfortable" and "unusual" situation.

"It's really uncomfortable because Trillanes has a case in the AFP ... He has to answer to the rules and regulations and the justice system of the AFP," Dolorfino told reporters. "*Parang* (It's like an) unusual situation: Somebody who is charged with coup d'etat, *nanalo* (wins) as senator."

But Dolorfino—whose men have been surveyed by the AFP on how they felt about Trillanes becoming a senator—said that although Trillanes was still facing coup d'etat charges, it was "nice to see somebody from the AFP making good in politics."

Busy

Asked what his men thought of Trillanes' victory, Dolorfino said he and his soldiers were not talking about such things because they were busy fighting terrorism in Metro Manila and the communist insurgency.

Asked whether it was better for soldiers to run for public office than lead coup attempts to push for reforms, he replied in the affirmative.

"Launching a coup is an undemocratic means of effective political change and a violation of our regulations," Dolorfino said.

He said military men were known to be "men of rigid discipline," in the first place.

"We all want to have a democratic system of government, and here [is] a group of military men known for their professionalism and discipline getting involved in undemocratic acts like launching a coup d'etat," he said of Trillanes and company.

Ex-Navy officer makes history

From page A1

Abalos' announcement—which he made after reading the ballot tally from Surigao del Norte, which accounted for 207,361 votes—was greeted with modest applause from the election lawyers present. Trillanes' lawyer, Reynaldo Robles, contained his jubilation with a smile.

Trillanes actually did not fare well in the province, with only 44,604 votes that put him at No. 16.

But his hold on No. 11 in the overall tally remained firm, leading Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III of GO and Miguel Zubiri of Team Unity (TU) by 272,670 votes and 384,231 votes, respectively.

Overjoyed

"*Tuwang-tuwa kami* (We're overjoyed)," Robles told reporters.

Robles said he would try to "work it out" for the 35-year-old former Navy lieutenant to leave his cell in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, for the proclamation.

"He said it was OK with him not to attend his own proclamation. But I told him he owed it to the public to [be there], as a way of thanking and honoring all those who voted for him," Robles said.

The lawyer said Trillanes had become "anxious" over the proclamation of the other winning senatorial candidates. "We felt that he should have been proclaimed also despite the uncanvassed returns. It was mathematically possible, but highly improbable, for the other candidates to overtake him."

The Comelec proclaimed last week the first 10 winners in the senatorial race, including six GO candidates, ensuring the opposition's continuing dominance of the Senate.

Robles said that after the Surigao del Norte certificate of canvass was tabulated, he was actually preparing to argue that Trillanes should now be proclaimed.

He said he could only heave a sigh of relief when Abalos made the announcement.

"He is the first senator to be elected while in detention, as far as I know," Robles said of his client. "I think my information's pretty accurate."

Fight for last spot

With Trillanes' impending proclamation, the battle will focus on the fight between Pimentel and Zubiri for the last spot.

The latest Comelec tally showed Pimentel still leading Zubiri by 111,561 votes. Contrary to TU expectations, the votes from Surigao del Norte failed to dislodge Pimentel from the 12th spot.

Zubiri garnered a total 56,011 votes compared to Pimentel's 56,165 votes.

"We are thankful that the canvassing is finally over for Trillanes. Of course, we will not leave Koko (Pimentel). We will continue to support him and make sure that the right votes will be counted," Robles said.

Unaccounted votes from Maguindanao and several towns in Basilan, Bogo in Cebu and Biñan in Laguna were, according to Abalos, still pegged at less than 500,000, which could still alter the rankings of Pimentel and Zubiri.

The fight for the 12th spot could be extended should the Comelec en banc decide to declare a failure of elections and hold special polls in Maguindanao, where massive electoral fraud is said to have occurred.

A hearing on the matter is scheduled today after Trillanes' proclamation.

To his advantage

Robles said detention would not prevent Trillanes from performing his duties as senator.

If anything, he said, being confined to a room every single day would even work to the new senator's advantage.

"He would be more focused on his work crafting laws because he has nothing else to do as soon as he wakes up in the morning. He can't go gallivanting in the malls or even night-clubbing," Robles said, grinning.

Moreover, the lawyer said, Trillanes would not "abuse the people's trust" by using his election "as a ticket, a way out of detention."

The only thing Trillanes will ask the court is to allow him to serve as a senator and to attend the Senate sessions, Robles said, adding:

"There will be no problem even if he has to go home to his cell every night."

Robles said Trillanes remained committed to his advocacy for reforms, including reforms in the Armed Forces of the Philippines: "It is still his principal advocacy."

The man already has some 20 proposed measures addressing corruption, education, and poverty alleviation, his lawyer said. *(Story on Page A1.)*

Unrepentant

Trillanes has been languishing in jail since he and more than 300 young officers and soldiers took over the Oakwood serviced apartments in Makati City in July 2003.

The mutineers denounced government and military corruption but were accused of staging a failed power grab. They surrendered after the daylong uprising.

While some of the other mutiny leaders reconciled with President Macapagal-Arroyo after making public apologies, Trillanes has remained unrepentant, criticizing the administration for widespread corruption and rights abuses.

With only a P5-million budget, raised from the sale of his battered car and contributions from relatives, Trillanes was the lowest spending front-running candidate in the senatorial elections.

His campaign gathered steam toward the end as opposition forces bankrolled his TV advertisements.

He placed third in votes cast by the military, despite efforts by defense and military officials to dissuade troops and their families from supporting him.

Trillanes' victory in his first foray into politics has baffled many because he had to wage his campaign from behind bars.

In an interview with journalists allowed by the court at his detention center, he openly attacked Ms Arroyo and demanded her ouster.

Political analyst Earl Parreño told The Associated Press that Trillanes' victory was "a verdict against GMA (Ms Arroyo) and a verdict against the whole system."

Still up in the air

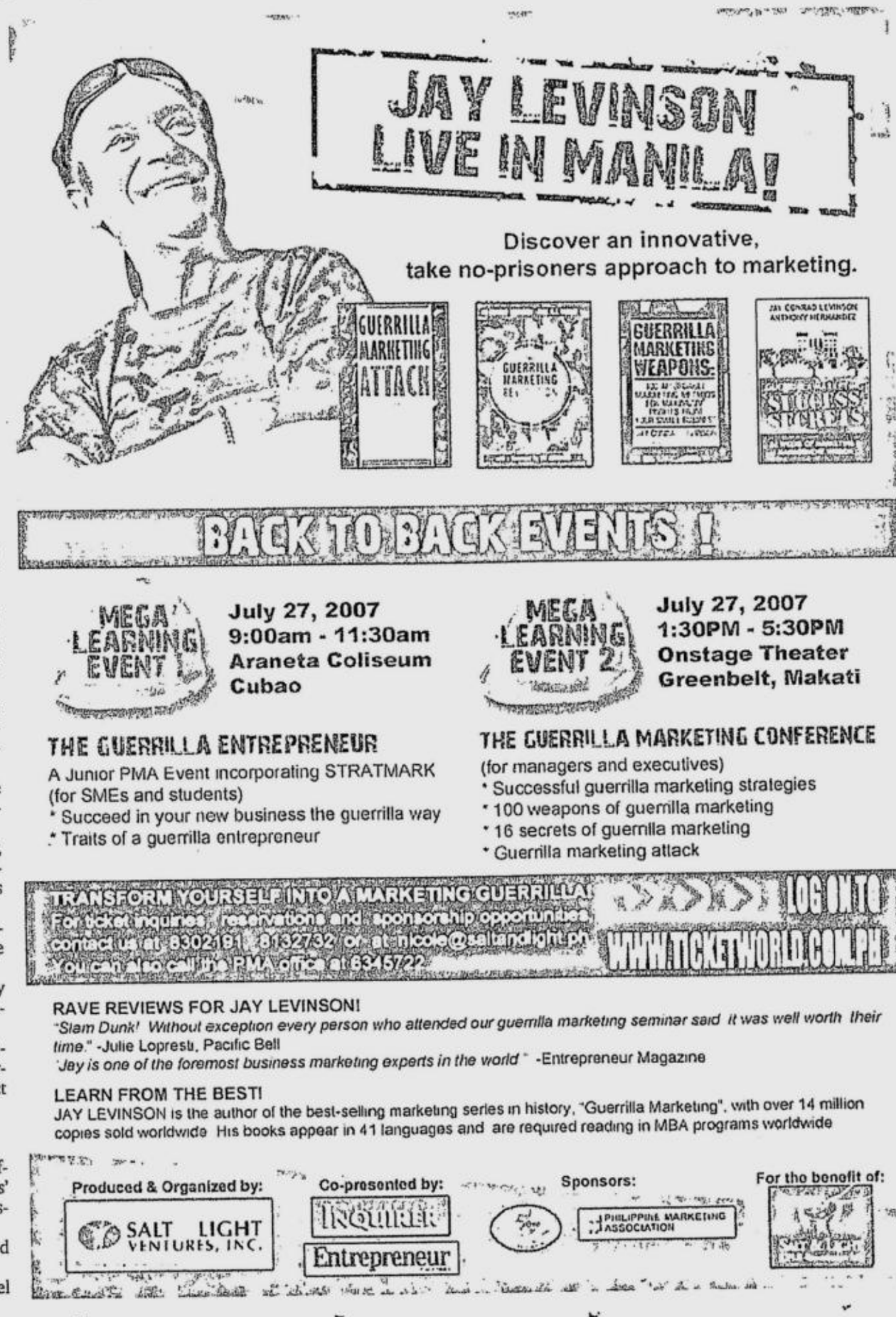
The military has been surveying several officers, asking them, for example, if Trillanes' victory was a vote against the Arroyo administration or a defiance of the top brass.

But whether Trillanes will be able to attend his proclamation remained in question.

Lawyer Robles asked Judge Oscar Pimentel of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148 for permission in Trillanes' behalf—but filed the motion at past 4 p.m.

By then, Pimentel had left his office.

Nevertheless, Robles said, the judge had made the assurance that he could still act on the motion early today, hopefully just in time for the 9:30 a.m. proclamation. *With reports from DJ Yap, Reuters, AP*



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Jalosjos was good, prisons chief says

By Julie M. Aurelio

CONVICTED RAPIST ROMEO Jalosjos will not be moving out of maximum security prison despite a Malacañang order reducing his two life terms to 16 years.

Prisons Director Vicente Vinarao said the ex-congressman will remain in the maximum security detention area of the New Bilibid Prisons and will observe the same routine that he has been following for the past 13 years.

"We will also impose the same security measures. There will be no change," Vinarao said.

Prison sources initially said Jalosjos might be transferred to the minimum or medium security area because of the commutation.

On Tuesday, Malacañang announced the commutation of Jalosjos' two life terms to 16 years, 3 months and 3 days based on a recommendation of the Board of Pardons and Parole.

"His evaluation for the past few years has been generally good, thus his term was recommended to be commuted," Vinarao said.

"Jalosjos did not commit any violations during his stay in the NBP. He followed the rules and regulations inside the prison. It was on this basis that he was recommended [for commutation]," he added.

Jalosjos was convicted in 1997 for two counts of statutory rape and six counts of acts of lasciviousness under the Revised Penal Code. His victim was an 11-year-old girl.

He was initially sentenced to two life terms and was ordered to pay P400,000 in civil indemnity and P400,000 in moral damages.

In December 2004, Jalosjos' mother made a personal appeal to President Macapagal-Arroyo to grant her son a presidential pardon after he was brought to the hospital complaining of chest pains.

Jalosjos, 66, will not be eligible to apply for a pardon until he reaches 70.

According to initial estimates by prison officials, following the commutation, Jalosjos will have served his sentence by November 2008.

As of May 30, 2007, Jalosjos has already served, with allowance for good behavior, a total of 13 years, 5 months and 15 days, prison sources said.

Vinarao explained that if a prisoner's behavior is good during the period of evaluation, he or she is given what is called a good conduct time allowance of 15 days. This means the sentence he is to serve is reduced by 15 days.

The INQUIRER tried to contact the ex-congressman but was told that Jalosjos has refused to talk to the press.

FACE OFF
Speaker Jose de Venecia raises the hand of his main rival for the speakership, Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia, during a cordial chance encounter Wednesday night at the wake of Ester Araneta, grandmother of Sen. Mar Roxas, who was buried yesterday. The two rivals, both from parties loyal to President Macapagal-Arroyo, arrived separately at the Bahay na Puti, the Araneta residence, in Cubao. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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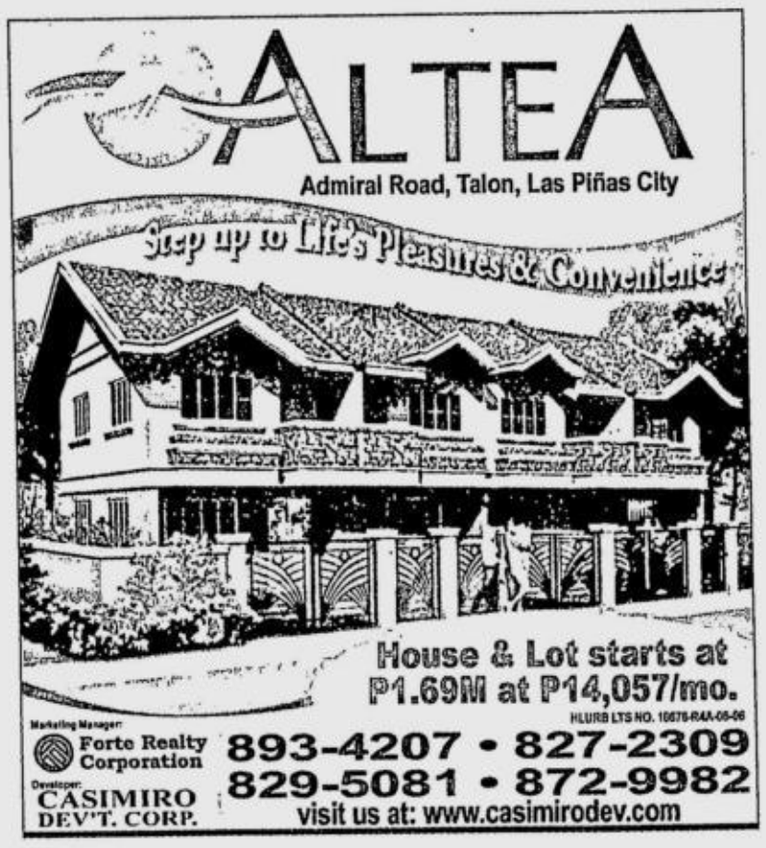

JOB IN PERIL

Pasay fireman may face charges for opening parcel

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE FIREFIGHTER CAUGHT ON CAMERA OPENING A PARCEL DURING the fire that razed the Philpost building in Pasay City may face administrative and criminal charges.

He may also lose his job if found guilty.

The fire, which could have been caused by faulty electrical wiring, destroyed more than P1 million worth of property.

FO2 Ricky Cataluna, a member of the Pasay City fire department, was ordered to explain in writing why he had opened a package at the Customs section while the Philippine Postal Office was on fire.

"We gave him 72 hours to air his side," Supt. Sofia Mendoza, fire marshall of the Southern Police District, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Caught on camera

Cataluna and two other unidentified firefighters were caught by a television camera trying to open the package. The other two were reportedly members of Pasay volunteer brigades.

The Philpost building on Domestic Road caught fire at around 11:23 p.m. Tuesday and was put out nearly four hours later after reaching the second alarm.

Though firefighters are expected to salvage valuables, they are supposed to hand these over to the proper authorities and not open them.

Mendoza said the district's Bureau of Fire Protection had yet to see the footage in question.

She said that based on Cataluna's explanation, they would decide whether or not to file charges against him.

Dismissal

"Probably, we will file charges for conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service and grave misconduct," she said. The charges are punishable by dismissal from government service.

If dismissed, Cataluna will no longer be eligible for any government job. He will also have to forfeit whatever benefits may be due him.

The district fire marshal said the BOC, which was conducting its own investigation, could also file criminal charges against the Pasay City firefighter for opening the parcel.

The two volunteer firemen, if identified, face criminal cases as they are not employees of the bureau.

"The BFP has already ordered our internal affairs section to conduct an investigation into the matter before we mete out the penalty to Cataluna," Mendoza added.

Mike Arroyo drops libel suit vs Tulfos

By Margaux C. Ortiz

MIKE ARROYO, HUSBAND OF President Macapagal-Arroyo, has asked the court to dismiss the libel case he filed against the brothers Ramon, Raffy and Erwin Tulfo.

In a motion filed in a Quezon City Regional Trial Court, Arroyo said he was no longer interested in pursuing the case.

Judge Ralph Lee of the QC RTC Branch 83 would decide on the motion, filed through Arroyo's lawyer Ruy Alberto Rondain, in a scheduled hearing on June 27.

In his affidavit of desistance, Arroyo mentioned that he "miraculously survived" his recent life-threatening medical condition through the prayers and support of family and friends.

"Because I have been generously given a second lease on life, I have decided to forgive everyone who has caused me pain. I am no longer interested in pursing the case," Arroyo said.

The President's husband filed the libel case against the brothers last year, accusing them of conspiring with one another to publish malicious allegations against him in the People's Journal newspaper.

Arroyo said the Tulfos suspected him of having caused the cancellation of their television program "Isumbong Mo" on RPN-9 in August.

The Journal newspaper column quoted the Tulfos as saying Arroyo persuaded the TV network's general manager, Leonor Linao, not to renew their contract after they denounced suspected smuggling activities of the first gentleman's alleged girlfriend Vicky Toh.

"The offended party was indicated in the column as a protector of illegal activities, and the story gave the public impression that Arroyo was morally unfit to be a presidential spouse," Assistant City Prosecutor Jun Rodulfo said in his resolution in January.

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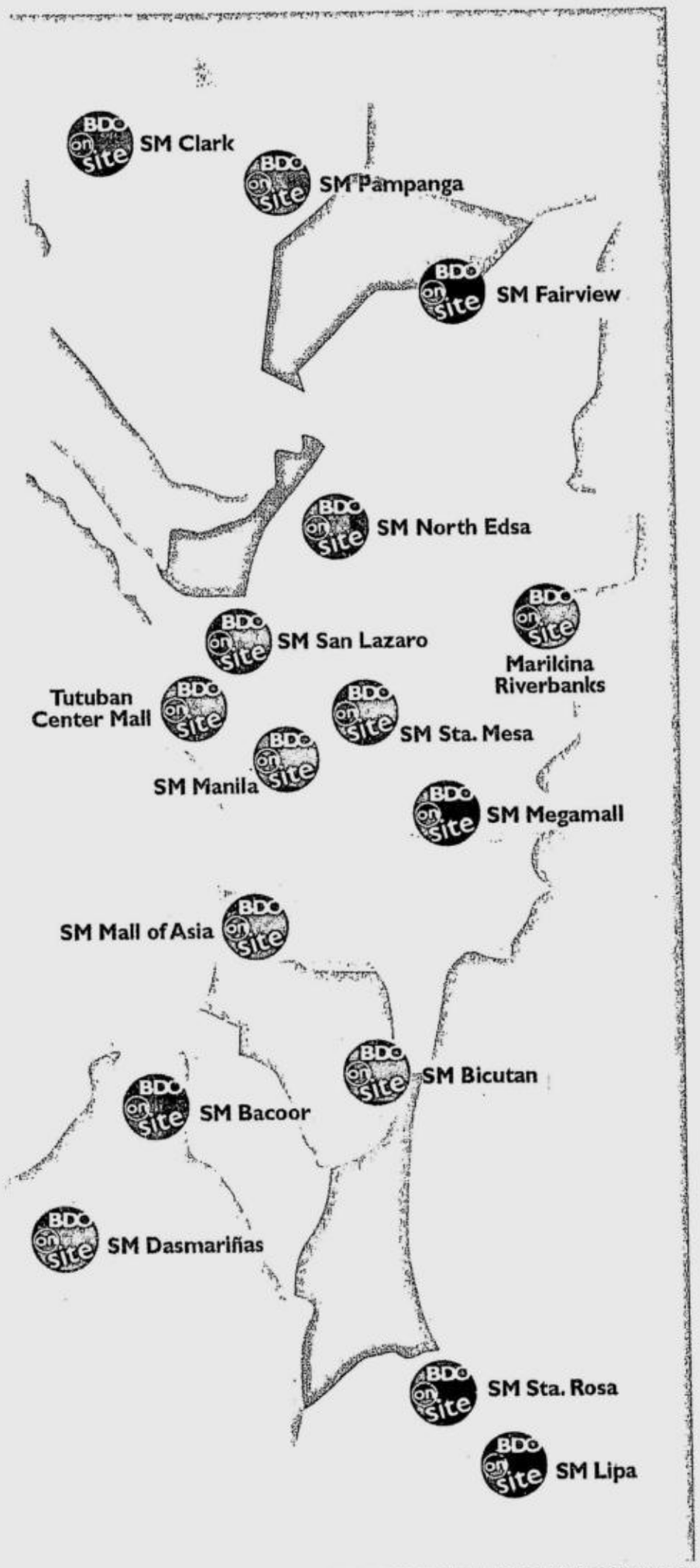

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Ruffa, children get police security detail

RUFFA Gutierrez leaves the office of Gabriela, a militant women's organization. The actress, who alleged she was a battered wife, sought support from the group in a meeting with Gabriela officers yesterday. JOAN BONDOC

By Alcuin Papa

CITING "GRAVE THREATS" ALlegedly from her estranged husband Yilmaz Bektas, movie star Ruffa Gutierrez was given three police bodyguards by the Philippine National Police for her protection.

Chief Supt. Romeo Hilomen said yesterday the policemen would guard the actress and the couple's two daughters, Lorine, 3; and Venice, 2. "Bektas can hire anyone to do harm to Ruffa and her children," Hilomen said.

The police official said Gutierrez sent a written request for police security to PNP Chief Director General Oscar Calderon on Wednesday.

In the letter, Hilomen said Ruffa was "getting grave threats" from Bektas and was "afraid for her safety."

Yesterday, at around 11 a.m., Gutierrez's mother Annabelle Rama went to Hilomen's office to meet their escorts. "The threat level is high. So I gave her three security men," Hilomen said, adding that they would continue to assess the situation.

The security team, with ranks of Police Officer 3 and Senior Police Officer 1, had been in the service for at least 10 years and "experienced" in providing close-in security to VIPs, Hilomen said.

"They are experienced and ready to give their lives for Ruffa and her two daughters. I can vouch for their experience and capabilities. If Ruffa doesn't like their faces, she may change them," he said. The three were previously assigned to guard Sen. Rodolfo Biazon. For security reasons, Hilomen did not reveal the names of the guards.

He said the three would wear civilian clothes if they carried short firearms, and police uniforms when carrying high-powered automatic guns.

Hilomen said the bodyguards would stay with Gutierrez children and her guests for at least one month. He said Rama promised to take care of the officers' meals.

Bektas, who married Gutierrez in Manila in 2003, had reportedly threatened to take his two daughters with him.

Last month, Gutierrez announced she and Bektas were ending their marriage. Gutierrez alleged her husband beat her while Bektas said he had enough of her partying.

Reports also surfaced that she married a Richard Daloia in 1999 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The actress said Bektas knew about the marriage.

Burger chain outlets face closure for lack of permit

By Margaux C. Ortiz

SEVERAL OUTLETS OF A POPULAR burger chain were ordered by the Quezon City government to secure business permits or face closure.

Neil Lina, Market Development and Administration Department (MDAD) chief, said only 21 of 85 Burger Machine outlets had business permits.

He warned Gilmore Food Corporation, which operates Burger Machine outlets, to comply immediately with provisions of the city's market code to avoid penalty.

In a letter to Gilmore president Tessa Acuña, Lina gave the company 15 days to comply with the order or face "legal action and the immediate closure, demolition or removal of their stalls if the evidence so warrant."

Lina said that as of June 4, the MDAD had issued a total of 24 cease and desist orders against Gilmore. "However, the firm has defied the order because all the outlets we have closed down reopened the next day," Lina said in a statement.

He said Gilmore Food Corporation had to settle with the city over P10 million in debts.

Gilmore officials could be fined from P1,000 to P5,000 or face imprisonment for one month or both for the operation of outlets without permits.

"We are looking into allegations that some Burger Machine operators have been photocopying paid invoices and using these in other outlets to avoid settling their obligations with the city government," Lina added.

He said they were also coordinating with health officials after receiving reports that many Burger Machine employees had no sanitary and occupational permits.

"The MDAD classifies these fast food outlets as hawkers for occupying easements and sidewalks," Lina said.

The INQUIRER tried to get Acuña's side but her secretary said she and other Gilmore officials were in a meeting.

Lina said they had also started issuing closure orders against public and private market stall owners without business permits.

The campaign included slaughterhouses operating illegally, he said.

Boratongs lived lush life, says cops' star witness

By Kristine L. Alave

THE BORATONG COUPLE LIVED the lifestyle of the rich and famous, government witness Samer Palao told the court yesterday as he listed the properties the Boratongs allegedly acquired while at the forefront of illegal drug operations in Pasig City.

Testifying at the Pasig City Regional Trial Court, Palao, Boratong's right hand man until he turned star witness for the police, said alleged drug lord Amin Imam and his wife Memie, maintained eight bank accounts in the Equitable PCI Bank. "Boratong had four bank accounts while his wife also had four," he added.

The couple also bought houses, lots, and rice mills in Balagtas, Bulacan, Marawi City, and Greenwoods, Pasig City, and owned luxury cars such as Toyota Prado, Honda CRV, Cadillac, two Hummers, and a Toyota van used to ferry Boratong's children to and from school, Palao said. "The money came from their shabu business," he stressed.

Palao alleged the couple also gave him millions as part of his "bonus." In 2003, he said he was able to buy a house and lot, as well as a Honda CRV, with money from the couple's drug income.

In 2006, Palao said the Boratongs wired him P4.6 million in an account set up by his wife in Equitable-PCI Bank.

With Palao's new statements, the prosecution sought to establish that he was under Boratong's employ, an assertion that is being challenged by the defense.

Boratong allegedly owned the 2,000-square meter compound of shabu stalls in Pasig City demolished in a raid in 2006. The suspect, however, said it was Palao who operated shabu dens in Barangay Sto. Tomas in the city.

DID YOU KNOW

ACT No. 136 of the Philippine Commission established on June 11, 1901 the Supreme Court, which holds judicial power. Its first chief justice was Cayetano Arellano. Jose P. Laurel, before becoming President, acted as chief justice of the Supreme Court. The high court currently holds office on Padre Faura St. in Ermita, Manila. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

METROBRIEFS

San Juan plebiscite

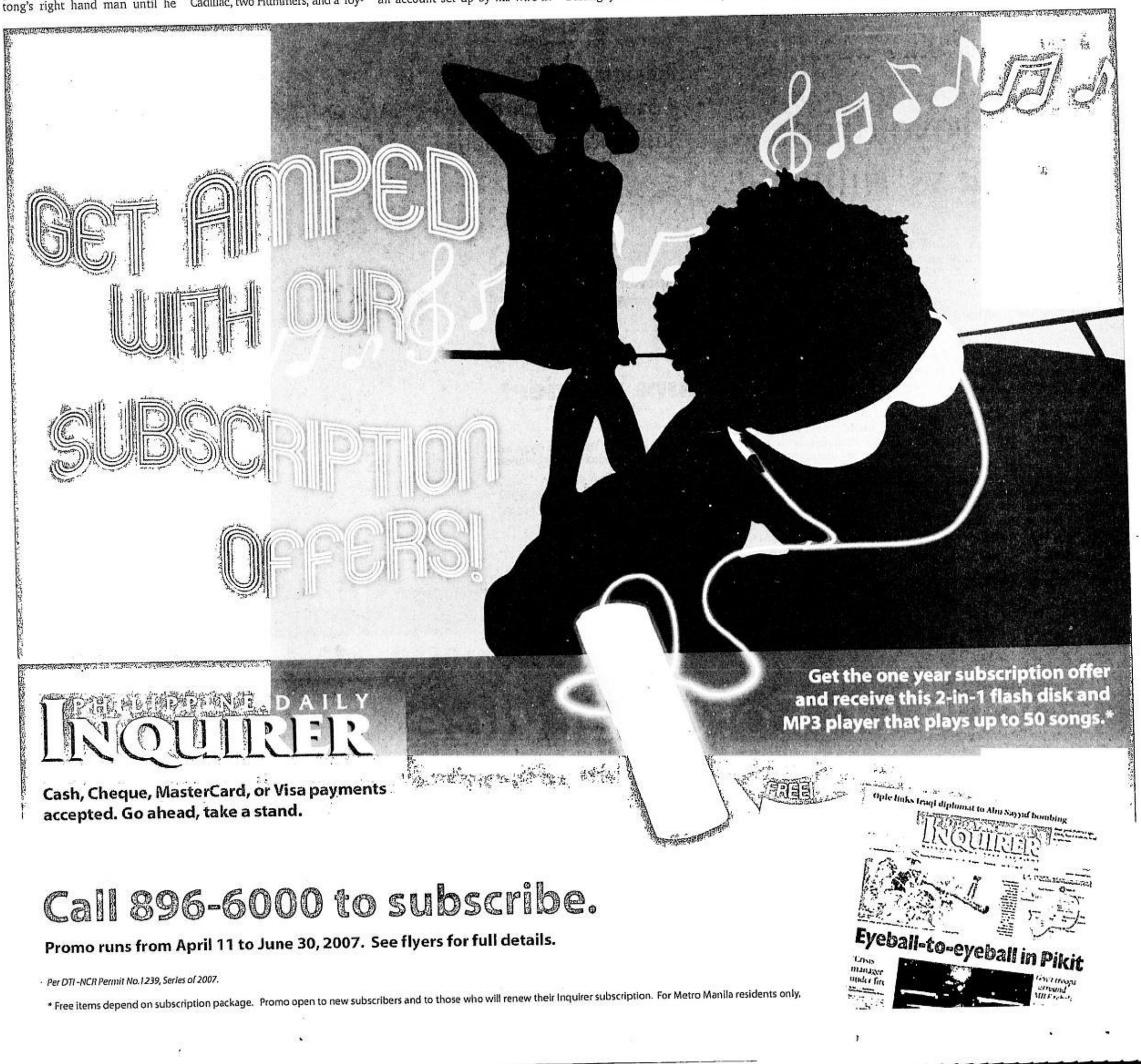
PROMISING progress for the town, San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito urged his town mates to vote for the transformation of the municipality into a city in a plebiscite tomorrow. The San Juan cityhood bill was authored by San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora and Senators Jinggoy Estrada, who also served as mayor of the town, and Alfredo Lim, incoming Manila mayor. Ejercito said cityhood would mean a higher budgetary allocation for San Juan from the national government's Internal Revenue Allotment. The municipality of San Juan is composed of 21 barangays. *Kristine L. Alave*

Baywalk displays out

REPLICAS of the Great White shark and Tyrannosaurus Rex will no longer be familiar fixtures at the Baywalk along Roxas Boulevard in Manila after its owner had these removed. Outgoing Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said the "private owner," who lent the animal displays for free to the city government, decided to pull them out because it could be included in the turnover to the new administration. Installed in October 2006, around 12 dinosaur figures were removed along with the shark. Atienza declined to name the owner of the figures, and only said the company was the same supplier for the Disneyland theme park. The mayor said that while many enjoyed the displays, "a small number hated it." The move to pull out the installations had no political color, he added. *Allison W. Lopez*

Jeepney fare hearing

THE LAND Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has scheduled a hearing on June 28 for the proposed restoration of minimum jeepney fares to P7.50. Invited to the hearing are jeepney groups seeking a minimum fare of P7.50 in the National Capital Region, and Central and Southern Luzon. The minimum was lowered to P7 in these regions late last year as fuel prices stabilized. The fare cut was done in response to stable fuel prices. The jeepney groups, however, said fuel prices have gone up six times this year, cutting into "already small" profit margins for drivers and operators. *Riza T. Olchondra*



HAMAS militants take a vehicle and weapons from the headquarters of the security forces loyal to President Mahmoud Abbas June 13. REUTERS

Hamas seizes broad control in Gaza Strip

JERUSALEM—HAMAS FORCES consolidated control over much of Gaza on Wednesday, taking command of the main north-south road and blowing up a Fatah headquarters in Khan Yunis, in southern Gaza.

In northern Gaza and Gaza City, Hamas military men, many of them in black masks, moved unchallenged through the streets as Fatah fighters ran short of arms and ammunition and abandoned their posts. Hamas controlled all of Gaza City except for the presidential compound of Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah and the Suraya headquarters of the National Security Forces, the Palestinian Army. Hamas has surrounded Al Suraya, calling on the occupants to surrender.

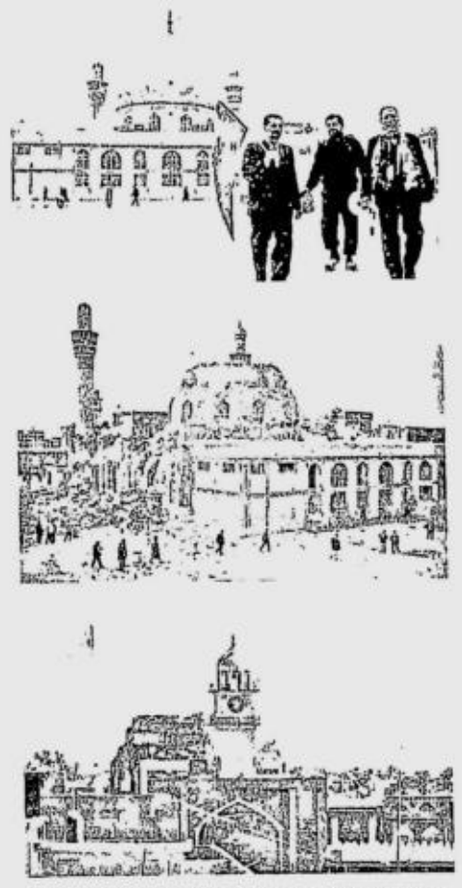
The powerful Hamas move to exert authority in Gaza, and the poor performance and motivation of the larger security forces supposedly loyal to Fatah, raises troubling questions for Abbas and Israel, and leaves the United States with a dwindling menu of policy options.

Abbas faces the collapse of Fatah power in Gaza and a putative Palestinian state divided into a West Bank run by Fatah and a Gaza "Hamastan," to use a Palestinian coinage.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel warned of "regional consequences" if Gaza fell under the complete control of Hamas, an Islamist movement that does not recognize Israel's right to exist. Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said Hamas control of Gaza would limit Israel's ability to negotiate with Abbas, as Washington wants.

Hamas spokespersons said the movement had no political goal except to defend itself from a group within Fatah collaborating with Israel and the United States. They said they wanted to bring the security forces under the control of the unity government, in which Fatah agreed to play a part until the current fighting.

Some Israeli security officials say Israel wants to see the West Bank isolated from Gaza, even more so with Hamas in control there. One official suggested that Hamas' show of strength in Gaza would make it more likely that the Israeli military would intervene there this summer to cut back Hamas' military power. The Israeli security services say Hamas, which is able to smuggle weapons and explosives from Egypt, is developing a sophisticated army on the model of Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. *NYT*



COMBINATION of three images shows the stages of destruction of the Askariya Shrine in Samarra, Iraq. From top to bottom: A February 2004 photo of the shrine, the shrine in February 2006 following an explosion which destroyed its dome, and a June 13 view after insurgents blew up its two minarets. AP

Vatican halts aid to Amnesty over abortion issue

VATICAN CITY—THE VATICAN ON Wednesday said it was suspending all financial aid to Amnesty International and called on all Catholics to stop supporting the human rights group, accusing it of promoting abortion.

"No more Catholic financing of Amnesty International after the organization's proabortion about-turn," said a statement from the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

The council's president, Cardinal Renato Martino, said the "suspension of all financing of Amnesty by Catholic organizations and by individuals" is the "inevitable consequence" of the group's recent decision to support access to abortion for women who had been raped or whose health was endangered by their pregnancy.

Amnesty Italy promptly said it did not receive any Vatican or Catholic Church funding anyway.

In a statement, Amnesty Italy said it had decided in April to involve itself in issues relating to abortion "to the extent that they are directly linked to its actions for the right to health and against violence against women."

As a result it will call for an end to the penalization of women who have abortions and the right of women who are victims "of sexual violence or incest" or run health risks to have abortions.

But it will not conduct any worldwide campaign in favor of abortion or its general legalization and "will not make any judgement on whether it is right or not."

Martino meanwhile said: "Thanks be to God, there is no internationally-recognized right to abortion," before attacking "the proabortion pressure groups which continue their propaganda in the framework of what (the late Pope) John Paul II called 'the culture of death.'

"It is extremely worrying that an organization as worthy as Amnesty International bends to the pressures of these groups," he said.

The Vatican statement reproduces statements by Martino on the US Internet site National Catholic Report.

The site also quotes Widney Brown, one of the heads of Amnesty International, who pointed out that 68,000 women die each year from backstreet abortions.

Brown said that Amnesty's views on abortion were inspired by its international campaign to combat violence against women. *AFP*

70 million years ago, birdlike giant in China

SCIENTISTS HAVE UNCOVERED a huge surprise in the Inner Mongolia region of northern China: The fossil skeleton of an unusually robust birdlike dinosaur that lived 70 million years ago. The animal appeared to be a young adult 25 feet long and weighing 3,000 pounds and, if it had lived longer, would probably have grown even larger.

Paleontologists said the discovery contradicted widely held theories that carnivorous dinosaurs got smaller as they evolved more birdlike characteristics. But they emphasized that the new specimen did not challenge the theorized link between dinosaurs and birds.

The Chinese scientists who made the discovery, being reported Thursday in the journal Nature, said the skeleton belonged to a dinosaur family that included the beaked, birdlike oviraptor. This family was not closely related to the dromaeosaurid dinosaurs generally thought to be ancestors of modern birds. *NYT*

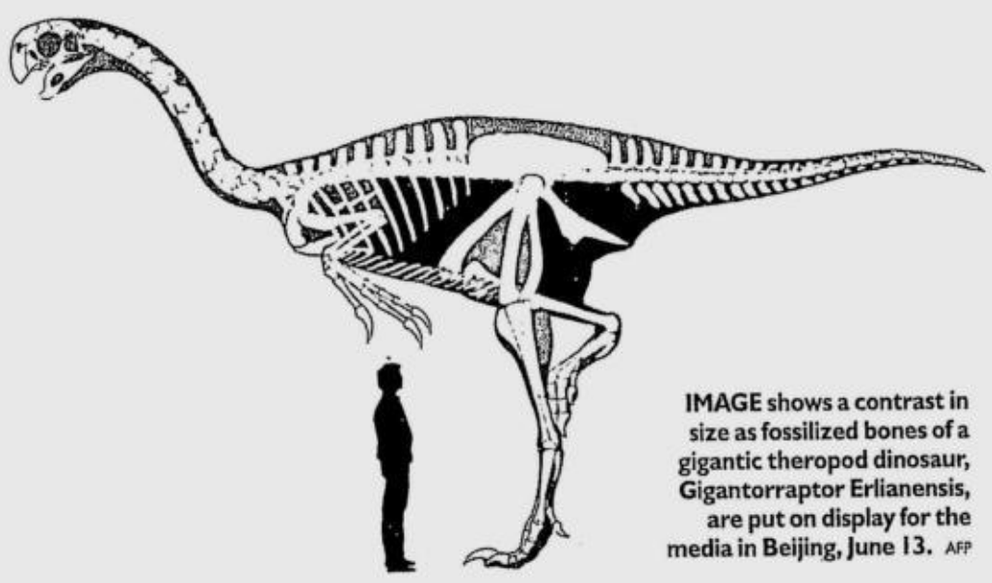


IMAGE shows a contrast in size as fossilized bones of a gigantic theropod dinosaur, Gigantorraptor Erlianensis, are put on display for the media in Beijing, June 13. AFP

US House passes post-shooting rampage gun bill

WASHINGTON—THE DEMOCRATIC-led US House of Representatives on Wednesday responded to the deadliest shooting rampage in modern American history by passing legislation to help keep guns out of hands of the mentally ill.

On a voice vote, the House sent the measure—which would be the first major gun control bill enacted since 1994 and bolster background checks for gun buyers—to the Democratic-led Senate for needed concurrence.

The bill was drafted in consultation with the four million-member National Rifle Association, the nation's biggest gun-rights group, after a deranged gunman killed himself and 32 others in April at Virginia Tech university.

"I think the chances are very strong that we can get this passed in the Senate," said Democratic Sen. Charles Schumer of New York, provided the legislation is not laden with amendments that gun rights backers find objectionable.

There was no immediate word from the White House if President George W. Bush, who supports gun rights, would sign the measure into law.

"We are following the legislation closely and are supportive of Congress's efforts to strengthen the background check system," said White House spokesperson Scott Stanzel.

The legislation would provide financial incentives for states to provide mental health and criminal records to a data base used for federal background checks on gun buyers.

The 1968 Gun Control Act prohibits anyone found by a court to be "a mental defective" from possessing a gun. It also bars felons, fugitives, drug addicts and wife beaters.

But because of state privacy laws and fiscal restraints, most states have failed to fully report such records to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

A new report issued by administration agencies on Wednesday showed that only 23 states now provide information to the national database regarding mental health reasons.

Americans are among the world's most heavily armed people, and the country has one of the highest murder rates.

There are an estimated 250 million privately owned guns in the United States, which has a population of about 300 million.

About 30,000 people a year die from gun wounds. *Reuters*

UNKNOWN DISEASE Wang Cheng (right), 23, of Xuzhou, east China's Jiangsu province, is suffering from an unknown disease, contracted when she was 7, which has caused her legs to continue to grow, with the widest part of her leg currently measuring 70 cm (27.6 inches). REUTERS

American legal excess: Judge tries suing pants off dry cleaners

WASHINGTON—ROY L. PEARSON JR. wanted to look sharp for his new job as an administrative law judge here. So when his neighborhood dry cleaner misplaced a pair of expensive pants he had planned to wear his first week on the bench, Pearson was annoyed.

So annoyed that he sued—for $67.3 million.

The case of the judge's pants, which opened for trial in a packed courtroom here on Tuesday, has been lampooned on talk radio and in the blogosphere as an example of American legal excess. And it has spurred complaints to the District of Columbia Bar and city officials from national tort reform and trial lawyer groups worried about its effect on public trust in the legal system.

"I don't know of any other cases that have been quite this ridiculous," said Paul Rothstein, a professor of law at Georgetown University.

While recounting the day he says the cleaners tried to pass off a cheaper pair of pants as his, Pearson began to cry, asking for a break and dabbing tears as he left the courtroom.

The lawsuit dates back to spring 2005. Pearson, 57, a longtime legal aid lawyer who is representing himself, was appointed to a new job as a District of Columbia administrative law judge.

Pearson says in court papers that he owned exactly five suits, all Hickey Freemans. He took the suits to Custom Dry Cleaners, in a strip mall in gritty northeast Washington, for alterations.

When the owners, Korean immigrants who came to America in 1992, could not find one pair of pants, Pearson demanded $1,150 for a replacement suit. The owners did not respond; he sued.

Pearson argues that under the city's consumer protection law, the owners, Soo and Jin Chung and their son, Ki Chung, each owe $18,000 for each day over a nearly four-year period in which signs at their store promised "Same Day Service" and "Satisfaction Guaranteed." *NYT*

Shiite holy site bombed again; Iraq braces for the worst

BAGHDAD—SUSPECTED AL-QAIDA bombers have toppled the towering minarets of Samarra's revered Shiite shrine, dealing a bold blow to Iraqi hopes for peace and reopening old wounds a year after the mosque's Golden Dome was destroyed.

The attack on Wednesday stoked fears of a surge in violence between Muslim sects. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government rushed to contain Shiite wrath against Sunnis: It clamped a curfew on Baghdad and asked for US troop reinforcements in Samarra, 100 km north of Baghdad, and for a heightened American military alert in the capital.

But sketchy reports of sectarian strife began to come in. Police told of at least four Sunni mosques in Baghdad and south of the capital attacked by arsonists and bombers, and of a smaller Shiite shrine bombed north of here. On Thursday, police said a woman and child were wounded in a repeat bombing on one of the Sunni shrines attacked a day earlier.

The Samarra attack also threatened to deepen Iraq's political crisis, as the 30-member bloc of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr immediately suspended its participation in parliament in protest.

The Golden Dome bombing in February 2006, at one of Iraqi Shiism's holiest sites, was also blamed on Sunni militants linked to al-Qaida. That attack unleashed a bloodbath of reprisals—of Shiite death-squad murders of Sunnis, and Sunni bombing attacks on Shiites. At least 34,000 civilians died in last year's violence, the United Nations reported.

Wednesday's stunning attack came in near-simultaneous explosions at about 9 a.m., completely bringing down the two slender golden minarets, 30 meters (100 feet tall), that had flanked the dome's ruins. No casualties were reported.

How the attackers evaded the Askariya shrine's guard force, strengthened considerably after the 2006 bombing, was a mystery.

Al-Maliki said policemen at the shrine were detained for questioning—15 of them, according to a senior US military official. The prime minister also said an unspecified number of other suspects were arrested in Samarra and were being interrogated in connection with the shrine attack.

The blasts shook Samarra, a city along the Tigris River, sending a cloud of dust billowing into the air, said Imad Nagi, a storeowner 100 meters from the shrine. "After the dust settled, I couldn't see the minarets any more. So, I closed the shop quickly and went home."

Nearby blacksmith shop owner Farouq al-Samaraie said, "I didn't expect there would be another explosion at Askariya mosque because it was already attacked last year."

Resident Abdul-Khali Mohammed predicted violence in the capital: "The Shiite militias now will seize this opportunity to kill Sunni families in Baghdad."

An indefinite curfew was immediately imposed on Samarra, and, as Iraqi Army and police reinforcements and US troops poured in, the streets emptied by mid-afternoon, witnesses said.

A few hundred US soldiers had been stationed around Samarra but had left shrine security to Iraqi forces. *AP*

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Bush links Syria to bombing in Beirut that killed MP Eido

LEBANESE police inspect the scene of an explosion in Beirut June 14 which killed anti-Syrian legislator Walid Eido (inset). Eido's allies blamed the car bomb attack on Damascus. Eido, his eldest son, two bodyguards and six passersby were killed in the attack near a Beirut beach club. REUTERS

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH ON WEDNESday indirectly accused Syria of involvement in the Beirut blast that killed a Lebanese anti-Syrian MP and nine others.

US officials said the attack was aimed at undermining democracy in Lebanon.

"There has been a clear pattern of assassinations and attempted assassinations in Lebanon since October 2004," Bush said in a statement.

"Those working for a sovereign and democratic Lebanon have always been the ones targeted. The victims have always been those who sought an end to Syrian President (Bashar al-)Assad's interference in Lebanon's internal affairs."

Lebanese MP Walid Eido, 65, his eldest son Khaled and eight others were killed on Wednesday in a bomb blast near his Beirut beach club that the ruling majority in parliament blamed on Damascus.

"I strongly condemn today's assassination," Bush said.

He added: "The United States will continue to stand up for Lebanon, its people, and its legitimate government as they face these attacks."

The assault "on Lebanese state institutions by terrorists and armed extremists, cross-border arms trafficking, and efforts by the regimes in Damascus and Tehran to foment instability in Lebanon must stop now," he said.

Damascus continues to wield considerable clout in Lebanon, where a standoff between the Syrian-backed opposition and the Western-backed government has paralyzed politics for seven months.

Eido, the Sunni chair of parliament's defense committee, was a member of the Future Movement of MP Saad Hariri, whose father, former Premier Rafiq Hariri, was assassinated in a similar seafront blast more than two years ago.

Hariri's slaying has been widely blamed on Syria.

Eido is the third member of the parliamentary majority to be killed in a car bombing in the past two years.

In a statement, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice condemned the bombing and described it as "yet another vicious and cowardly act against a courageous member of Lebanon's democratically-elected Parliament."

"The aim of this attack can only be the silencing of yet another Lebanese political leader working for a sovereign and democratic Lebanon," Rice said.

Asked if Washington believed Syria was behind the attack, state department spokesperson Sean McCormack said it was too soon to tell.

"That's the first question that people ask: 'Is Syria behind it?' I can't tell you at this point," he told reporters. "But very clearly this is the work of those who intend or want to undermine Lebanese democracy."

Lebanon's ruling coalition also accuses Syria of trying to block the creation of an international court to try suspects in the killing of Rafiq Hariri, a five-time prime minister of Lebanon murdered in a car bomb attack in February 2005.

Hariri's murder provoked protests and international outrage that forced Syria to end 29 years of military domination in Lebanon.

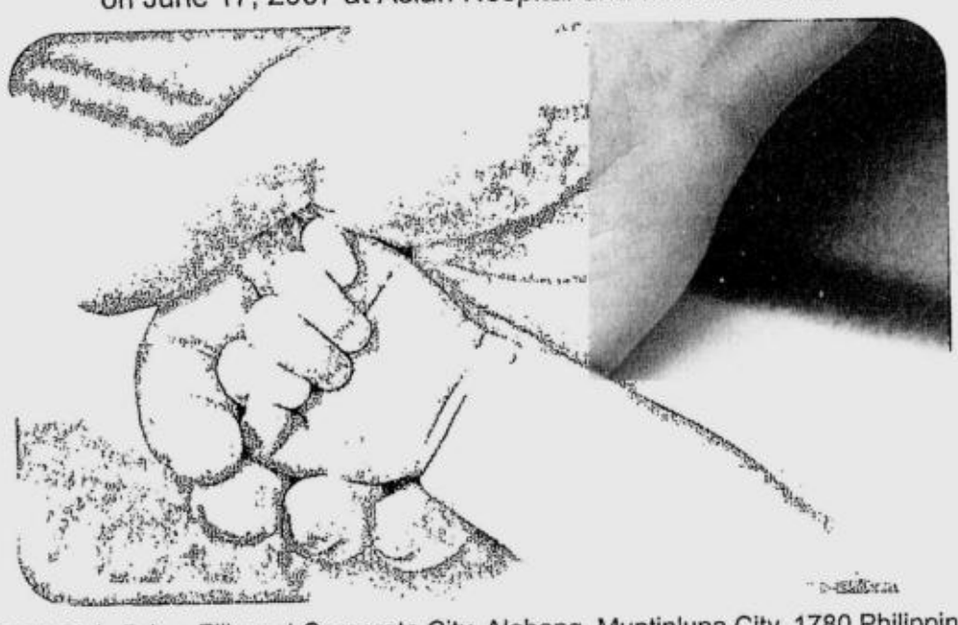
Damascus has denied any link with the killing of Hariri or the series of other assassinations and attempts against anti-Syrian figures in Lebanon. *AFP*

ASIAN HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER

Happy Father's Day!

To share in your joy and celebration, we are giving away Gift Baskets from SÄNTIS Delicatessen to all dads* this Father's Day.

* Promo is available only for the fathers of babies born on June 17, 2007 at Asian Hospital and Medical Center



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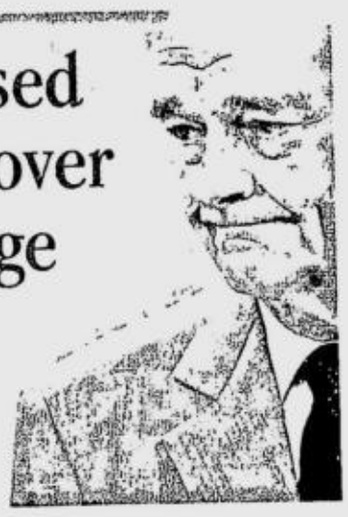
Chirac accused of 'treason' over death of judge



FORMER French President Jacques Chirac in picture taken Dec. 5, 2006. AFP

PARIS—FORMER FRENCH PRESIdent Jacques Chirac was accused of "treason" Wednesday for allegedly helping the government of Djibouti cover up the truth behind the 1995 death of a French judge.

Elisabeth Borrel, who believes her husband Bernard Borrel was murdered by Djibouti agents, said that France cooperated with President Ismael Omar Guelleh's efforts to bury the affair because of fears of losing its military base in the tiny east African state.

Her accusation came a day after documents were made public which appeared to show that in 2005 Chirac advised Guelleh to take France before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague over the French criminal investigation into Borrel's death.

Flanked by her lawyers, Elisabeth Borrel appealed to Chirac's successor Nicolas Sarkozy to "make a commitment to ensure the respect of those principles which alone will see the murderers of my husband identified and brought to justice."

"It was Chirac himself who suggested to Djibouti's president to take France before the ICJ," said her lawyer Olivier Morice.

"Juridically what happened comes under the heading of treason. Since the start of the affair diplomatic considerations have taken precedence over justice," said Laurent de Caunes, who is also on her legal team.

Borrel's half-burned body was found at the foot of a ravine 80 km from the town of Djibouti in October 1995. He had been working on secondment to the Djibouti justice ministry.

A local enquiry concluded that he had committed suicide, but the next year French justice officials disputed the findings and opened a murder investigation.

Elisabeth Borrel and other campaigners believe her husband was killed on orders from senior figures in the Djibouti government because he was in possession of compromising information, possibly concerning arms trafficking or terrorist attacks on French interests in Djibouti.

The government of Djibouti has tried for several years to gain access to the dossier being compiled by French investigating magistrates, but their demands have been repeatedly turned down by French justice officials.

In March this year judges in France opened a separate investigation into allegations of French political pressure in the Borrel case. *AFP*

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SPORTS

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Harbour sweeps to 3rd PBL title

HARBOUR Centre players and team officials whoop it up after their 3-0 title sweep. RYAN LIM

By Jasmine W. Payo

AGAIN THE CLIMB TOWARD another title was anything but steep for Harbour Centre.

Batang Pier captured a third straight PBL championship yesterday, this time by another 3-0 sweep at the expense of the Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala Moneymen in the Unity Cup Finals.

With Jason Castro, Chico Lanete, Ryan Araña and JC Intal proving unstoppable, Harbour Centre routed the Cebuana five, 90-75, to cap its romp of the best-of-five series at the Olivarez College Sports Center.

"Our championship experience was a big factor," said Harbour coach Jorge Gallent. "It's their (Moneymen) first time in the Finals and our poise showed in the end game."

But it was Harbour's pressure defense in the first half that forced the Moneymen to play nowhere near their intimidating form in the elimination round.

Batang Pier grounded Ken Bono, Doug Kramer and Macky Escalona, the trio who towed the Moneymen to a league-best 10-2 elimination record which was highlighted by a conference-best seven straight wins.

It couldn't have been any tougher for the Moneymen as the Batang Pier guards had their way early.

Just minutes after bagging his second straight Most Valuable Player award, Castro underscored his worth by scoring 18 points, eight rebounds and three steals.

"It was just all hard work," said Gallent. "Everyone played very well, from the role players to the stars."

Lanete, who also captured a second straight Finals MVP plum, also had 18 markers, including a key three-point play for a 73-61 advantage after the Moneymen had moved within 70-61 midway in the fourth period.

Also on top of his game was Araña, who slashed and sliced the Moneymen defense early in the first half to set the tone for the rout.

Araña, named Pivotal Player, sparked the early scoring barrage by unloading 10 points in the second period for a 45-34 Harbour spread by halftime.

The young squad earned a spot in league history by becoming the fifth team to capture a third straight title after ESQ, Stag, Tanduay and Welcoat.

Batang Pier also became the third team to

HARBOUR/ A30

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BAP should complain to Samahang Basketbol, says POC

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE considers the grievances of the Basketball Association of the Philippines as an internal matter that only the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas should thresh out.

POC spokesperson Joey Romasanta said the BAP should raise its concerns with the SBP leadership and not with the International Basketball Federation (Fiba), of which the BAP is no longer a member.

"They (BAP officials) don't have to go to the Fiba," said Romasanta. "It's purely an internal matter that the BAP has to settle with the leadership of the SBP."

BAP president Go Teng Kok, in a letter to Fiba secretary-general Patrick Baumann two weeks ago, criticized the way the SBP has been handling its operations.

But Baumann told Go that the BAP is no longer recognized by the Fiba and any complaint should be addressed to the SBP, the federation now accredited by the world cage body.

BAP secretary-general Graham Lim clarified that the BAP only wanted to have a more active role in the programs of the new organization.

"If you want an active role in the federation, you should coordinate with the officials of that organization," said Romasanta.

"However, there's a big difference between seeking an active role and wanting control."

Romasanta said Baumann had also asked POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. to assist the SBP in some of its administrative functions to improve the group's correspondence with the Fiba.

Cojuangco debunked Go's claim that the SBP has taken its other programs for granted to give way to the formation of the PBA-backed national team bound for the Fiba Asia Championships next month.

Cojuangco said the SBP has been busy forming the men's and women's team for the Southeast Asian Games, apart from laying down the groundwork for officiating and its grassroots development program.

Ginebra, Air21 seek q'final clinchers today

BARANGAY GINEBRA AND AIR21, INSpired by impressive quarterfinal series-opening wins in the Talk 'N Text-PBA Fiesta Cup, try to sweep their respective foes today at the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay.

The Gin Kings looked so fearsome in a 113-87 rout of San Miguel Beer on Wednesday that odds are now heavily stacked in their favor in their 4:35 p.m. collision with the Beermen.

Air21 also has the psychological edge in its 7:20 p.m. date with Talk 'N Text, which got bamboozled in the second half by the Express who went on to score a 121-102 win.

Both victories came unexpectedly, not by the teams that clinched them, but in the way they were churned out.

The Ginebra-San Miguel match, which many thought would be close, was decided early in the third period with the Kings taking a couple of 20-point leads.

But both Ginebra's Jong Uichico and Air21's Bo Perasol refused to admit gaining tremendous edge.

"I know their players," Uichico said of the Beermen, "because I handled that team for such a long time. This (Game 1 win) does not, in any way, indicate how this series will go."

GAMES TODAY
(Cuneta Astrodome)
4:35 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs. San Miguel Beer
7:20 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs. Air21

Rod Nealy will again be the main point of the Ginebra game on both ends. The do-it-all import scored 27 points and had 13 rebounds in the Game 1 win.

"The last time I checked, it was a three-game series," Perasol said. "There's still no reason for us to be overjoyed at this point, because if there's any team that can come back, it's Talk 'N Text."

There is cause for concern, however, for Perasol, as Nino Canaleta, who scored 11 of the Express' 38 third-quarter production, twisted his left ankle in the fourth period and is listed as doubtful.

"We hope it's nothing serious," said Perasol, who already lost leading local scorer Gary David to an ACL tear near the end of the elimination round. "I believe he can still play."

Musong R. Castillo

INQUIRER PHOTO / AUGUST DELA CRUZ

LA SALLE'S Thai guest player Sanorsaeng Areerat (left) hugs teammate Regine Diego who sheds tears of joy after their hard win over Adamson.

La Salle lady tossers grab last V-League semis ticket

LA SALLE REPULSED Adamson with a sweep of the last three sets as the three-time champion Lady Archers completed a 19-25, 18-25, 25-22, 26-24, 15-6 victory in their playoff for the fifth and last semifinal berth in the Shakey's V-League at The Arena in San Juan yesterday.

GAMES SUNDAY
(The Arena, San Juan)
2 p.m.—Lyceum vs La Salle
4 p.m.—San Sebastian vs Ateneo

In a virtual repeat of their first-round faceoff, the Lady Archers fought back from two sets down behind Michelle Datuin and Jacqueline Alarca to keep their bid for a fourth straight title alive.

Datuin came away with 13 kills while Alarca had 12, most of them in the third and fourth sets before La Salle dominated the fifth frame.

La Salle also dropped the first two sets before outlasting Adamson, 23-25, 18-25, 25-17, 25-19, 15-10, in their first meeting last May 24.

The Lady Archers were forced to go through a playoff after finishing with a 3-4 mark following a loss to the Lyceum Lady Pirates, who shared first place with the Lady Stags on 6-1 cards.

La Salle joins Lyceum, San Sebastian, Santo Tomas (4-3) and Ateneo (3-4) in the next round of the event organized by Sports Vision.

The semifinals, a single round robin where the teams will carry over their elimination records, starts on Tuesday with La Salle clashing with Lyceum and SSC colliding with Ateneo.

Illam nine gains Major League World Series

HOME SQUAD INTERNATIONAL LITTLE League of Manila (Illam) outclassed Guam, 13-2, in four innings yesterday to earn the right to represent the Asia Pacific in the Major League (11-12) Girls Softball World Series at the Rosario Sports Complex in Pasig City.

As in their lopsided victory over the Guamanians the day before, the hosts proved just too strong with 11-year-old pitcher Irene Diaz giving up just three hits while striking out nine batters.

An 11-run attack in the second inning, highlighted by a grand slam home run by Isabella Ann Mendoza, was all the Filipinos needed to whip the Guamanians.

The Illam softbelles will try to improve on their fourth place finish last year in the World Series, set Aug. 17-26 in Portland, Oregon.

The host country's Junior (13-14) and Senior (14-16) Leaguers also appeared on the way to moving up to the World Series in their divisions.

The Filipina Junior Leaguers needed only six frames to crush China, 14-0, while the Senior Leaguers clobbered the Guamanians, 8-1.

It was the second straight win for the Senior Leaguers, represented by a team from Laguna, who moved within a win of gaining the 14-16 World Series slated Aug. 5-11 in Delaware.

The Junior Leaguers, bannered by a team from Bacolod City, need to prevail over Guam's 13-14 softbelles to reach the World Series slated Aug. 12-18 in Kirkland, Washington.

Castro nails 2nd MVP award over Bono

CASTRO: Milestone

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE LATEST HONOR EFFECTIVEly removed his personal doubts.

Harbour Centre's Jason Castro captured his second straight PBL Most Valuable Player plum yesterday to join the league's elite list of back-to-back winners.

"There are many good scorers and many good players in Harbour, so I didn't expect that I'd win another one," Castro said in Filipino.

The clutch-shooting guard became the first player in the past decade to bag the honor since Eric Menk won back-to-back MVP titles with Tanduay in 1997 and 1998.

Castro, though, pulled off the feat with two different teams.

"I got a lot of support when I joined Harbour and I didn't find it hard to adjust," said Castro, who bagged his first MVP title with Hapee-PCU in the last Silver Cup.

Castro, also a sensation with Philippine Christian University, finished with 490.77 points after collecting norms of 12.08 points, 5.67 boards, 4.75 assists and 1.25 steals.

The 21-year-old edged Ken Bono—the central figure in Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala's impressive campaign this season—in a tight race that tallied the statistical points and the players and media votes.

Bono, this conference's scoring leader, earned 465.53 points built on averages of 16.33 points, 6.75 rebounds and 2.16 assists per contest.

The Fantastic Freshman award went to Ryan Reyes, the rookie Fil-Am who joined Henkel Sista midway in the first round.

Castro and Bono headed the Mythical Team with Cebuana's Doug Kramer, Harbour's Chico Lanete and Toyota Balintawak's Dennis Daa.

Harbour . . . From page A29

pull off back-to-back championship sweeps, having dominated Hapee, 3-0, in their title run in the last conference.

The scores:

HARBOUR CENTRE 90—Castro 18, Lanete 18, Intal 15, Araña 15, Alonzo 6, Ortiguerra 5, Belga 4, Gamboa 3, Capati 2, Asoro 2, Vergara 2, Gaco 0, Duncil 0, Fernandez 0.

CEBUANA LHUILLIER 75—Yee 14, Capus 12, Kramer 10, Dela Cuesta 9, Bono 9, Sta. Maria 7, Escalona 7, Grijaldo 5, Burtscher 2, Viardo 0, Solis 0, Dulay 0.

Quarters: 19-16, 45-34, 67-53, 90-75

Archers shoot down Tams, take Nike title

By Jasmine W. Payo

LA SALLE SUSTAINED ITS PRESEASON streak behind unlikely hero James Mangahas as the Archers downed the Far Eastern University Tamaraws, 88-83, over the weekend in ruling the Nike Summer League at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Mangahas, a rookie forward, drained a pair of crucial baskets in overtime in a 12-point effort that sewed it up for the Taft Avenue-based squad.

Most Valuable Player Rico Maierhofer fired 13 points and grabbed 17 rebounds to lead five Archers in double figures.

Maierhofer and teammate Tyrone Tang were also named to the Mythical Five along with FEU's Mac Baracael, University of the East's Marcy Arellano and Mapua's Neil Pascual.

THE Archers pose for posterity after dominating the recent Nike league.

Earlier, Ryan Buenafe drilled in 23 points for the reigning NCAA champion San Sebastian College to repulse San Beda, 80-74, for the junior crown.

"We're not yet 100 percent," said coach Franz Pumaren of the Archers, who swept a pair of pre-season tournaments in the past two months.

La Salle, also backstopped by Cholo Villanuava and JV Casio, is one of the favored teams in the coming UAAP season after serving a one-year suspension.

The scores:

First Game (Juniors)

SAN SEBASTIAN 80—Buenafe 23, Bringas 21, Gusi 16, Cam 7, Delgado 3, Sikat 3, Ortuoste 2, Bautista 0, Ramsey 0, Andrada 0.

SAN BEDA 74—Salva 20, Lobaton 17, Babilonia 10, Panaligan 9, Bernas 6, Monteclaro 6, Dela Cruz 4, Revilla 2, Asinas 0, Del Rosario 0, Ayala 0, Altamirano 0.

Quarters: 20-10, 35-28, 54-50, 80-74

Second Game (Seniors)

LA SALLE 88—Maierhofer 13, Mangahas 12, Villanueva 12, Tang 11, Ilad 10, Casio 9, Co 8, Cua 6, Atkins 3, Walsham 2, Lee 2.

FEU 83—Adolfo 17, Cawaling 14, Fernandez 13, Baracael 12, Baroca 10, Ramos 7, Gerilla 5, Cervantes 4, Alisbo 0, Reyes 0, Cabagnot 0, Sanga 0.

Quarters: 15-16, 41-35, 59-57, 74-74, 88-83 (OT)

SPORTSWATCH

So chess player of the month

WESLEY SO, WHO BECAME THE COUNTRY'S youngest national junior chess champion with his scintillating triumph last month, was voted as "Player of the Month" by the Chess Journalists Association of the Philippines (CJAP) for May. So, at 13 the country's fourth highest-rated player, bagged the award by ruling the National Junor Chess Championships in Mandaluyong. So finished with 8.5 points on eight wins and one draw in the tournament organized by the NCFP, headed by Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay and sponsored by the Tagaytay City government under Mayor Abraham Tolentino.

107 fights in SJC derby finals

WITH 107 CHAMPIONSHIP FIGHTS LINED-UP, THE SJC 8-Cock International Derby finals blasts off at 1 p.m. today at San Juan Coliseum with the backing ort of Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Charlie Hao of Bicol, winner of the 2007 World Slasher Cup (first leg) leads the qualifiers with four points after two days of battle. Hao bagged the WSC Cup last January in partnership with Gengen Arayata using the Clyde and Yce entry. Arman Santos of Laguna (Jade Resort) and Louie Cua and Bobby Yulo of Negros Occidental (Amo) also posted four wins each. Within striking distance, with 3.5 markers, are Rep. Gerry "Boy" Espina (Mt. Panamao), Makati Invitational Derby champ Sam Mendoza (SM BST Scorpio) and Gov. Tony Kho and Bubot Booc (Anita Masbate).

12th leg of PCAP series Monday

THE 12TH LEG OF PINOY COCKERS ASSOCIATION of the Philippines (PCAP) 5-cock derby series rages at the Makati Coliseum on Monday with B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador as main sponsors. Two more derbies will be staged before the PCAP Cocker of the Year winner is finally known.The grand championship sizzles on July 7. Sandy Sur and Edwin Yap, with their entry Michael One, lead the race with 34.5 points while the team of Biboy Enriquez, Madlambayan Brothers and Jet Fernando (Firebird Jimafer) occupies second spot with 33.5 points.

300 entries vie in 'Hatawan'

BASED ON COCKHOUSE RESERVATIONS SO FAR, the annual "Hatawan Sa Tag-ulan" 6-cock derby, slated July 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 at the Roligon Mega Cockpit, looms as another blockbuster. About 300 or small- or medium-scale cockers are expected to vie in the event that dangles a guaranteed prize of P3.5 million for an entry fee of P8,800, according to host Rolly Ligon. Cesar Marquez of Quezon City and Ricky Yulo of Davao topped last year's 356-entry Hatawan. Marquez also drove home a Honda Civic for being the fastest win champ. Meanwhile, the venue's "Bracket of 5 Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan" starts at 8 a.m. tomorrow, said hosts Tony Jaen and Mario Tari.

One for Ripley's: Fonacier aces same hole in 2 days

Beats 225 million-to-1 odds

DAKILA FONACIER LIVED OUT A GOLFER'S WILDEST dream last weekend. He shot a hole-in-one on the same hole at Tagaytay Midlands last Saturday and Sunday.

The 60-year-old Fonacier, a 9-handicapper, first holed out in the Quarterly Members tournament on Saturday using a 9-wood on the 167-yard par-3 17th, a picturesque downhill hole.

"The ball bounced once about 3 feet from the flag, then dropped," said Fonacier, the former BIR commissioner and chair of Odyssey Music & Video Group. "Everyone around me went crazy."

At the same hole the next day, Fonacier again took the same 9-wood and swung.

"This time, the ball went a bit higher and had a stronger right-to-left draw, but it landed almost on the same spot and bounced in," he recalled. "It was my turn to go crazy."

Fonacier, who plays three rounds a week at his home courses at Midlands and Manila Golf Club, had his last ace—his second—24 years ago.

"There were 24 years between my second and third aces," he said. "Who would believe that I only had to wait 24 hours between my third and fourth?"

Golf statisticians estimate the odds of a hole-in-one to be as high as 42,952 to 1, although some insurance companies peg the hole-in-one odds at 15,000 to 1 for an average golfer. Pulling off the feat two days in a row on the same hole, however, raised the odds to an astounding 225 million to 1.

Fonacier was with retired Indonesian banker Victor The, engineer Richard Tan and retired SGV partner Popoy Flores during his first hole-in-one. Witnesses to the second ace were ADB executives Eiichi Sasaki and Rikard Elfving, Italian wine merchants Luciano Zanirato and Daniel Vigna and financial consultant Richard Dalao.

King James pays homage to San Antonio

JAMES: Awed

CLEVELAND—THE San Antonio Spurs are closing in on their fourth title in nine years with a surge that has impressed even LeBron James.

"It's awesome," the Cleveland Cavaliers forward told reporters: "They don't have the great athletes in the world. They don't have the greatest shooters in the world.

"But they have probably the greatest team in the world and that's what this sport is all about."

The Spurs can secure the title with a win over the host Cavaliers on Thursday and become just the eighth team in NBA history to win the finals in a four-game sweep.

Cleveland was handily beaten in the series' first two games in San Antonio but then lost game three, 75-72, on Tuesday night when the Spurs appeared vulnerable.

Cavaliers forward Drew Gooden compared his team's plight to a poker player laying down his final chips.

"We're all in right now," he said. "We're playing our last hand. Our luck has to change or the season is over. This is the ultimate challenge.

"People say it's an impossible task but you have to feel and believe it can be done. I think we'll have a better mind-set if we just win one game and take it from there."

Spurs coach Gregg Popovich does not want to hear talk of a dynasty, even though his team is gunning for its third title in the past five years.

"That doesn't even enter my head because it's all psycho babble," he said. "When I think of dynasties, two come to my mind real quick, UCLA and Bill Russell. Everything else is just talk after that."

James is averaging 21 points in the series but has not been able to dominate as he did in the Eastern Conference finals against Detroit.

Cleveland coach Mike Brown credited the Spurs' tight defense but said James was the victim of some bad luck on Tuesday even though the three-time All-Star scored 25 points.

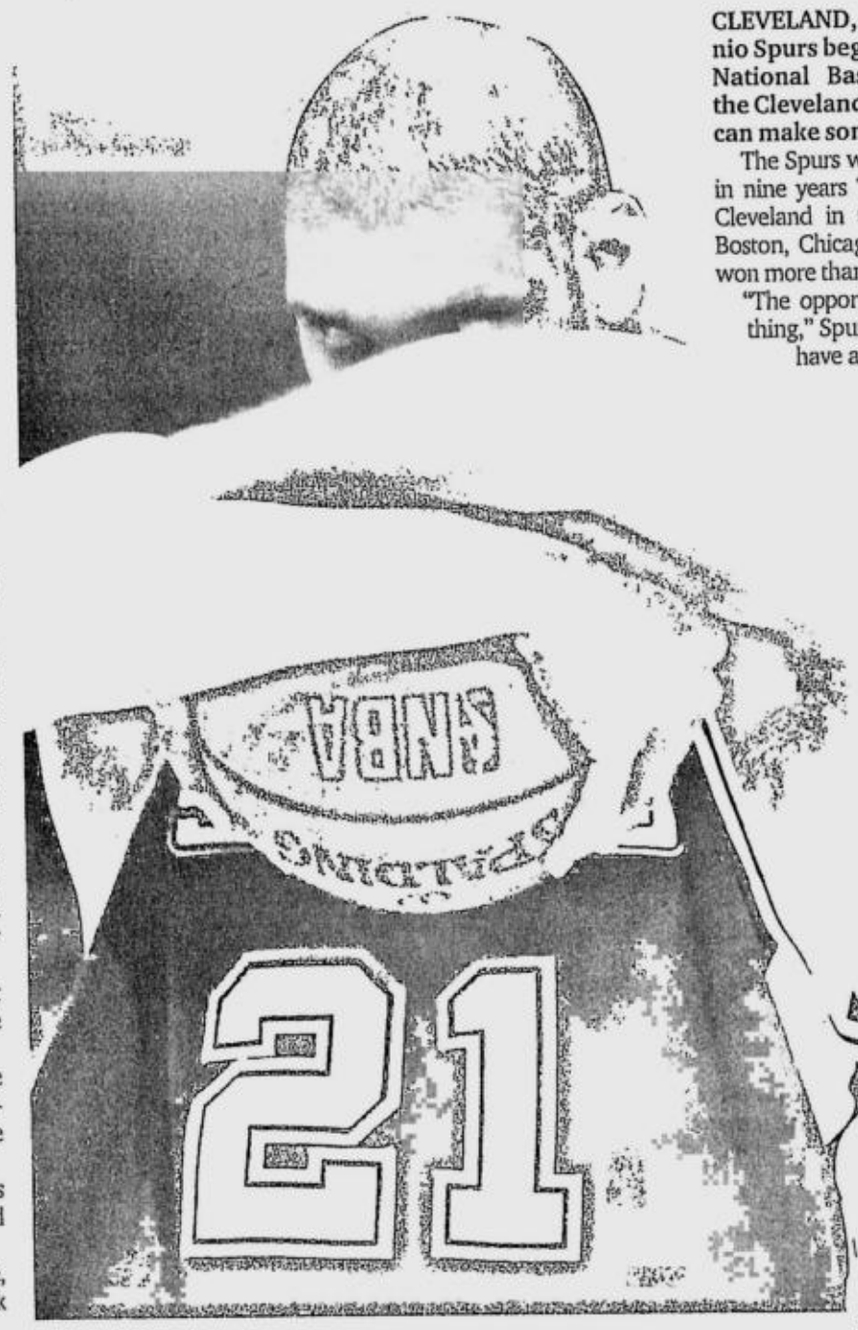
"Even though his shot wasn't falling he was still turning it up a notch with his aggression and he found a way to get to the rim," said Brown.

"On a couple of lay-ups, watching the tape, boy oh boy, I'd almost bet my whole paycheck those shots would go in."

Now the Cavaliers have to win four straight to claim their first title. *Reuters*

AS SPURS GO FOR SWEEP

Talk of new dynasty just can't be ignored



LIKE his grip on the ball, Duncan and the Spurs seem to have a lock on their fourth NBA title in nine years. AP

CLEVELAND, OHIO—WHILE THE SAN ANTONIO Spurs begin to consider their place among National Basketball Association dynasties, the Cleveland Cavaliers clung to the hope they can make some history of their own.

The Spurs will try to win their fourth NBA crown in nine years Thursday by completing a sweep of Cleveland in the best-of-seven NBA Finals. Only Boston, Chicago and the Los Angeles Lakers have won more than four league titles.

"The opportunity to do that is an unbelievable thing," Spurs' star big man Tim Duncan said. "To have a team that has the ability to challenge for a championship year in and year out, that's all you can ask.

"We've got to get this one done and of course we're focusing on that."

But the Spurs—winners in 1999, 2003 and 2005—are pondering their place in NBA history alongside the legendary 1960s Boston Celtics, several editions of Lakers and Michael Jordan's six-time champion Chicago Bulls of the 1990s.

"I do believe we have a big opportunity to do something special," guard Manu Ginobili said. "There aren't so many teams who have the chance to win four titles in nine years. We've got to do whatever it takes."

No team in NBA history has won a playoff series after falling behind 3-0, although Cavaliers coach Mike Brown warned, "There's always a first time for everything."

Seven of 11 finals with 3-0 starts have ended in sweeps, most recently in 2002. Even if the Cavaliers avoid the sweep in their first trip to the finals, Cleveland's 43-year drought of US sport champions figures to continue.

"Pride should have kicked in a long time ago," Cleveland's Drew Gooden said. "This is the ultimate challenge. We have to feel it can be done. We'll have a better mind-set if we win one game and take it from there."

Cleveland's 22-year-old superstar LeBron James, shut down by San Antonio's defense, admits the Spurs' greatness.

"It's awesome. They have a dynasty already at work," James said. "The experience factor—we don't like to make any excuses, but it definitely played a part in this Finals against a world-power team in the Spurs.

"They don't have the greatest athletes in the world. They don't have the greatest shooters in the world. But they have probably the greatest team in the world and that's what this sport is all about."

Duncan, a three-time NBA Most Valuable Player, struggles to see himself and his team alongside Bill Russell, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Michael Jordan among the NBA's all-time mightiest.

"There have been few dynasties. I don't know that we can consider ourselves a dynasty," Duncan said. "Dynasties are the Lakers of the '80s or the Celtics, teams that have done it for many years.

"Hopefully we can look back in a couple of years and be considered something like that. But as of now I can't imagine we would be considered doing something alongside those guys."

Spurs coach Gregg Popovich dismisses the notion, saying only the Celtics' run of 11 NBA titles in 13 years with Russell and UCLA's fabled US collegiate title run are worthy.

"It doesn't even enter my head. I think that's all psycho babble," Popovich said. "When I think of dynasties two come into my head, UCLA and Bill Russell. Everything else is just talk after that."

Popovich is at the heart of the talk about the Spurs, noted French guard Tony Parker, the NBA Finals' top scorer.

"It's just consistency. Every day in practice coach Pop—everybody knows he's crazy—s always looking for perfection. I think that's the only way you can keep winning. We play the same way and we believe in our system," he said.

"We've got a great organization. It's like a little family. That is how you build championship runs. Over the years it pays off."

Utah star Derek Fisher, whose Jazz lost to the Spurs in the semi-finals, played on three title teams with the Lakers but says the Spurs are greater. *AFP*

Tiger agrees: Oakmont toughest US Open test yet

OAKMONT, PENNSYLVANIA—Twice champion Tiger Woods, hunting a third major victory in four starts, will have to cope with the toughest greens he has ever seen at this week's US Open.

Although Woods usually dominates the storylines going into the big events, he has played second fiddle to Oakmont Country Club's daunting par-70 layout in the build-up to Thursday's opening round.

Oakmont's 667-yard 12th hole will become the longest par five in Open history and the 288-yard eighth will take over as the longest par three.

The tight, hilly course has few flat lies but is renowned for its slick, undulating greens which have been described by the players as scary fast.

"They are by far the most difficult greens I've ever played," world number one Woods told reporters.

"Winged Foot's were pretty tough and Augusta's are pretty tough," he added, referring to last year's US Open venue and to Augusta National, permanent home of the Masters.

"But both those golf courses have flat spots. Augusta may have these big, big slopes but they also have flat shelves where they usually put the pins on. Here, I'm trying to figure out where a flat shelf is.

"On this course, it depends on how the pins are set. If they go crazy, they can make it impossible. But if they put pins in generous spots, I think it will be just a fantastic test." The players did, however, receive a helping hand from Mother Nature on Wednesday when just under half-an-inch of rain fell, softening greens and fairways that had firmed up under scorching sunshine.

Australia's Geoff Ogilvy, the defending champion, also pinpointed Oakmont's greens as a major obstacle.

"The greens here are the obvious challenge to me," the 30-year-old said. "Everything else out there is similar to other US Opens.

"It has narrowish fairways, pretty good rough and bunkers but the greens here are something different. They are amazing and they run a bit faster than maybe they should in spots."

Asked to predict this week's winning total, Ireland's Padraig Harrington replied: "I would take four 72s.

"I wouldn't be putting my house that eight over par is going to win this tournament, but I certainly think it's got a chance."

As ever at a US Open, the ability to grind out pars and stay patient when the going gets tough will be crucial. *Reuters*

TIGER: Putting is key

Foreign bidders strike hard in PBC Int'l Open

FOREIGN KEGLERS CONTINUED TO unravel the lane conditions of the SM Mall of Asia Bowling Center late Wednesday, resulting in an upheaval in the Open division standings of the 36th PBC-Boysen International Tenpin Bowling Championships.

Showing the way was South Korean Kim Eun-jung, who soared to the top of the ladies' Open singles contest with a four-game series of 962 on lines of 189, 269, 246 and 258, respectively.

Kim was up by 27 pins over Malaysia's Zatil Iman, the new runnerup, who bowled 935 in the tourney sponsored by Boysen, Amway, Philippines Sports Commission and the Department of Tourism.

(The 36th PBC-Boysen Open men's and ladies' Open masters finals will be televised live from 2 to 6 p.m. tomorrow (Saturday) over Studio 23.)

Slipping to third place was national pool bowler Apple Posadas (914) in the event also supported by Accel, the official outfitter of the RP team.

Indonesia's Ryan Lalisang also made his big move in the men's singles, scoring a four-game series of 1,000 on lines of 278, 242, 236 and 244, falling just 40 pins short of frontrunning Julius Sy, who grimly held on to the top after a week with his 1,040.

Barging into third was Hong Kong's Wu Siu-hong, who came up with a 999 after rolling games of 247, 238, 258 and 256.

Also shooting to the spotlight was the Korean trio of Wong Jong-yoon, Kong Jin-seok and Oh Young-ki after they combined for 1,347 pinfalls in taking top spot in the men's Open team event.

Dipping to second place was the team of RP pool players Tyrone Ongpauco, Richie Poblete and Sy (1,314) while the troika of Biboy Rivera, Markwin Tee and youth masters champion Jeff Chan was at 1,312.

Moving into third place in ladies Open doubles was the Malaysian-Korean tandem of Zatil Iman and Kim Eun Jung, who put together a score of 826, 12 pins behind second running Alexis Sy and Marjo Reyes (838) and 42 off the first placed duo of Liza del Rosario and Holly Josef (868).

RODRIGUEZ (right) congratulates Hideki Matsui, who hit a three-run homer in the fourth inning. AP

A-Rod keys Yankees' 8th straight victory

NEW YORK—THE NEW YORK YANKEES WON THEIR EIGHTH STRAIGHT GAME WITH A 7-2 victory over the Arizona Diamondbacks in Interleague action on Wednesday, with Alex Rodriguez leading the charge with his Major-League leading 25th home run. The Yankees improved to 32-31 following their latest triumph and now trail the AL East-leading Boston Red Sox (41-23) by 8 ½ games. Mike Mussina (3-3) picked up the victory, his first since early May *Reuters*

Nadal sharp on grass; Hewitt exits

LONDON—RAFAEL NADAL MADE A SUCcessful transition to grass Wednesday, beating Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina, 6-4, 6-4, in the second round at Queen's Club.

Defending champion Lleyton Hewitt was upset by French qualifier Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, 7-6 (5), 7-6 (2), while third-seeded Fernando Gonzalez was stretched by Janko Tipsarevic of Serbia before the Chilean advanced, 7-6 (7), 4-6, 7-6 (7).

Fourth-seeded Novak Djokovic beat Robert Kendrick of the United States, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Nadal, the French Open champion, broke Del Potro in the ninth game of the first set, and then again to open the second.

"It's a big change from clay to grass, but I feel good," the top-seeded Nadal said. "The final last year in Wimbledon gave me a lot of confidence, and I'm feeling well."

Nadal, who has won three straight French Open titles, lost to top-ranked Roger Federer at Wimbledon last year.

"(Del Potro) started serving very well but he stopped a little bit and I could start to return more balls," Nadal said. "But I was calm because with my serve I was winning the games ... and that's important—especially on grass."

Nadal said he felt relaxed at the Wimbledon warm-up.

"I am coming here with not much pressure ... try to play good tennis, try to adapt as fast as possible to grass," Nadal said.

Sixth-seeded Hewitt, who also won here three straight years from 2000-02, was unable to break down Tsonga's big serve. *AP*

Iloilo scores stunner over Tagaytay

LUCENA CITY—THE LOWLY ILOILO Warriors pulled off a huge reversal in the 2007 Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National basketball tournament on Wednesday by downing front-running Tagaytay Spring, 85-82, at the Quezon Convention Center here.

Ruel Balgos starred for the Warriors with 21 points as the Ilonggos dealt the Cooking Oil Masters only their second loss in eight games.

Despite the setback, Tagaytay remained on top of the tourney supported by Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Yahoo Phils., San Miguel Beer, Caltex, Sun Cellular, Firefly Lightings, Trans Asia Shipping Lines, Molten, Nature's Spring, Basketball TV and Viva Prime Channel.

Defending champion Ozamiz Cotta beat Quezon-Villa Anita, 85-79, in the other contest. Bruce Dacia scored six of his 23 points in the fourth to power Ozamiz to their sixth win in nine outings.

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Tri)—Speed Almighty (4), Arithmetic (3), Treasure Hunter (5)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Daddy's Girl (6), First Of All (7), Perfect Time (5), Heart of Jonna (3)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Tiger Song (2), Ocean Deep (6), Batang Westside (3), Harrod's Magic (1)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Kat's Magic (5), Sapteraman (4), Macaleton (2), Spinning Bullet (1), Loveko'to (6)
Race 5—(Tri)—Midnight King (4), Bullet Day (5), Beautiful Pet (3)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Bahrain Celestial, Cool Turner (5), Seeing Red (9), Power Dance (8)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Modern Classic (7), Common Goal (4), Maawain/Mapagkwento (3) Federal Court (6)
Race 8—(Qrt/Tri)—Complexion (4), On the Fairway (6), Arctic Desert (2), El Cubano Coskee (7)
Race 9—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Nagtalabyog (11), My Lady Hannah (13), Parrot Moe (1), Lord Gold (12), Take Ten (6), Chana Girl (4)

SPORTS

RP OPEN BADMINTON

Hidayat heads stellar field

REIGNING OLYMPIC AND ASIAN GAMES CHAMPION TAUFIK HIDAYAT BRINGS HIS ACT to Manila next month as he joins the elite field seeing action in the 2007 Bingo Bonanza Philippine Open Badminton Championships at the PhilSports Arena in Pasig City.

The 26-year-old Hidayat, fresh off winning the Asian Continental Championship crown, is currently playing in the Sudirman Cup in Scotland and is expected to maintain his top form for the RP Open, slated to start July 18.

The Indon ace's participation will boost the already high-powered field for the tournament which has drawn the likes of world No. 3 Chen Hong of China, Japan's world No. 10 Shoji Sato and No. 19 Andrew Smith of England.

Currently ranked No. 11 in the world, Hidayat stunned world No. 1 and archrival Lin Dan of China to bag the Asiad's singles gold medal. Hidayat was also a semifinalist in the recent Indonesian Super Series.

Owner of the fastest backhand smash in singles—clocked at 320 kph—Hidayat is a byword in local badminton, owing to his awesome talent and his regular stint in the annual MVP Cup.

He thrives on backhand, forehand drop shots and net-play, which he hopes to display before local fans who are raring to see top-level action from the world's finest players.

INQUIRER PHOTO / RYAN LIM

HIDAYAT in action during the 2005 MVP Cup.

The $120,000 RP Open, a BWF (Badminton World Federation) Grand Prix Gold event, also stakes world ranking points and serves as an Olympic Qualifying tournament where players can also shoot for ranking points needed to qualify for next year's Beijing Olympics.

The tournament, sponsored by Bingo Bonanza Philippines for the second straight year, has so far lured players from 18 countries and regions, including China, Hong Kong, England, Wales, Slovenia, Russia, France, Switzerland, Canada, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Portugal, the United States, Indonesia and Germany.

The organizing IMG expects close to 200 players from 25 countries to compete in the event, which also serves as the last major tournament before the World Championships.

Kia Sorento and Carnival Top Quality Index

Kia Motors Corporation today announced that the 2007 Kia Sorento and Carnival (known as Sedona in some countries) both received top honors in Strategic Vision's 2007 Total Quality Index™ (TQI), leading the mid-size SUV and MPV segments respectively. Kia, one of the fastest growing automakers in the world, is also the most improved brand overall from last year's TQI survey. The U.S.-based research firm calculates their results based on the overall ownership experience of a vehicle.

Strategic Vision surveyed more than 27,700 new car owners who purchased their 2007 vehicle during the October-December 2006 period, focusing on the first 90 days of vehicle ownership. The Total Quality Index™ is the premier measure of new vehicle ownership in the U.S., and assesses total ownership experience, encompassing positive and negative product experiences, reliability, dealership experience and emotional attachment to a vehicle.

"The Total Quality Index is a nice feather in our cap, as it is based directly on consumer feedback," said Len Hunt, executive vice president and COO, KMA. "We are proud that the Sorento and Carnival have been recognized; they serve as prime examples of the continued effort Kia is making toward creating quality vehicles."

The 2007 Sorento also earned a five-star crash safety rating, the highest rating possible, for all seating positions in the latest frontal and side impact crash tests conducted by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), while the 2007 Carnival (Sedona) was selected by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) as one of only 13 vehicles to earn the "Top Safety Pick" award for its impressive performance with top ratings in frontal, side and rear impact crash tests, and was named the "Safest Minivan Ever Tested" by the organization.

The Carnival (Sedona) has also picked up the 2007 MotorWeek "Best Minivan" award in its 2007 Drivers' Choice Awards, while both the Sorento and Carnival (Sedona), along with six other Kia models, picked up The Car Book 2007's "Best Bet" distinction. Overall, Kia models improved 22% in J.D. Power and Associates 2006 Initial Quality Study (IQS), and improved twice as much as any competitor in the last 3 years, showing how the company continues to offer world-class quality and award-winning customer satisfaction.

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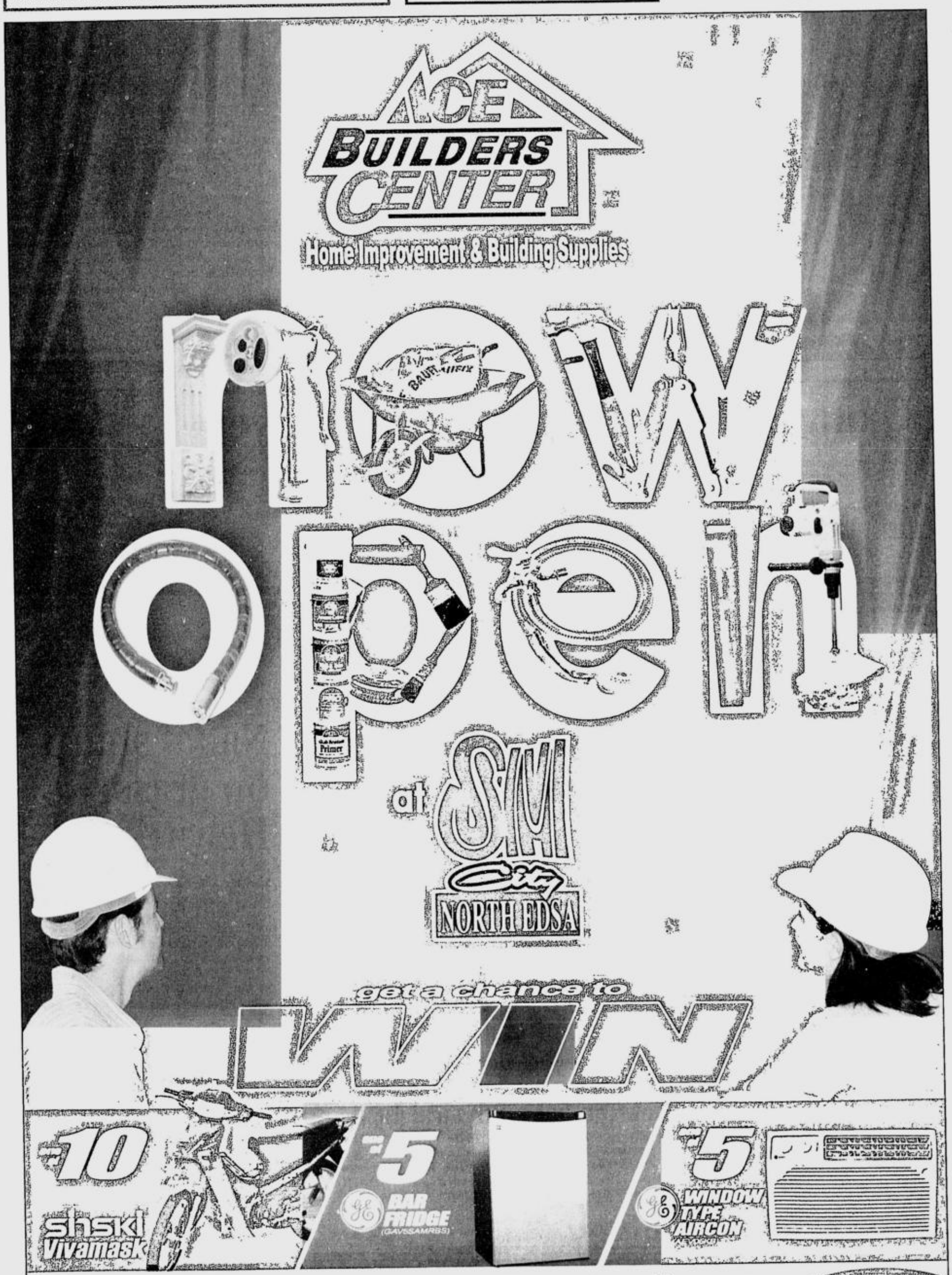

Young lady booters face Singaporeans in initial test

By Marc Anthony Reyes

HEAVY WITH YOUTHFUL TALENT BUT raw and inexperienced.

The national women's football team will gamble with this mix when it takes on Singapore in back-to-back matches beginning tomorrow at the PhilSports field.

The games will be the initial test for the team since its formation two months ago.

"We are actually in the exploratory stage," said co-manager Ernie Nierras of the decision to form a new team with emphasis on youth and speed.

"But based on what we have seen so far, we will have a stronger squad compared to the one we fielded in the 2005 SEAG."

The country finished fourth in the biennial event held here behind champion Vietnam, Myanmar and Thailand.

With an average age of 18, the RP lady booters—just like the Singaporeans—are trying to hone their skills for the Thailand SEA Games this December.

Team officials admitted that odds are stacked against the young and inexperienced RP team, but team co-manager Cathy Rivilla stressed that this is a far better team than the old SEAG squad.

Twenty-five-year-old Mariel Benitez, one of the few remnants of 2005 side, will be the skipper of a squad that includes Fil-Australian Nenita Dollente-Burgess.

"My job is to help them blend with the rest of the veterans of the squad," Benitez, who is also the sports director of the Philippine Women's University.

Burgess, 21, is a junior scholar at the Middleton Tennessee State University. Her mom hails from Sorsogon and she hopes her stint with the Adelaide Sensation in the Australian Soccer League will be of help.

The match tomorrow is set at 4 p.m., while Monday's game starts at 6 p.m.

Rivilla said the games are open free to the public.

Tinga M'tainbike Cup tomorrow at Fast Track Circuit

MOUNTAINBIKE FANS CAN LOOK FORWARD to an exciting weekend of mountainbike cross-country races as the two-day first Mayor Freddie Tinga Mountainbike Cup fires off tomorrow at the Fast Track Circuit in Taguig City.

It will be the first of a series of competitive mountainbike races that will be staged at the international-standard venue, organizers said.

Events to be disputed are the Midget (12-16 years), Youth (17-22), Juniors (23-29), Masters 1 (30-39), Masters 2 (40-over), Pro, Women's, Four Cross Challenge and the Jump competition.

Registration fee is P300, with practice day on Saturday. Late registrants will be billed P500.

The event is organized by Xtreme Worx Philippines with the support of the city government of Taguig, Brothers Burgers, Rush Energy Drink, Sabak MTB Shop, Dans Bike Shop, Elixir Trading, Waffle Time, Chris Sports and Coca Cola.

The Fast Track Circuit is located next to the Taguig Hall of Justice along Gen. Santos Avenue in Upper Bicutan, fronting Camp Bagong Diwa.

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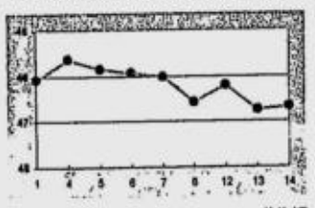

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As of 5 p.m., June 14, 2007

Stocks shoot through the roof

Market heaves sigh of relief over Wall Street news

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE STOCK MARKET AGAIN HIT ITS HIGHEST LEVEL in 80 years, boosted by Wall Street's overnight jump as investors there cheered lower bond yields.

"This is just a knee jerk reaction, more like a sigh of relief to Wall Street's overnight jump" said Francisco Liboro, PCCI Securities president. "It also helps that overall outlook remains positive over the long term."

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index surged 84.8 points or 2.39 percent to 3,628.62, raising the likelihood that the index could hit the 3,700 level.

During the day's trading, the market also posted a new high of 3,633.65.

The index's previous high was

STOCKS/B7

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■ Local airlines move to keep standards high, fares low /B4

■ Merchandise export growth slows to 5% /B5

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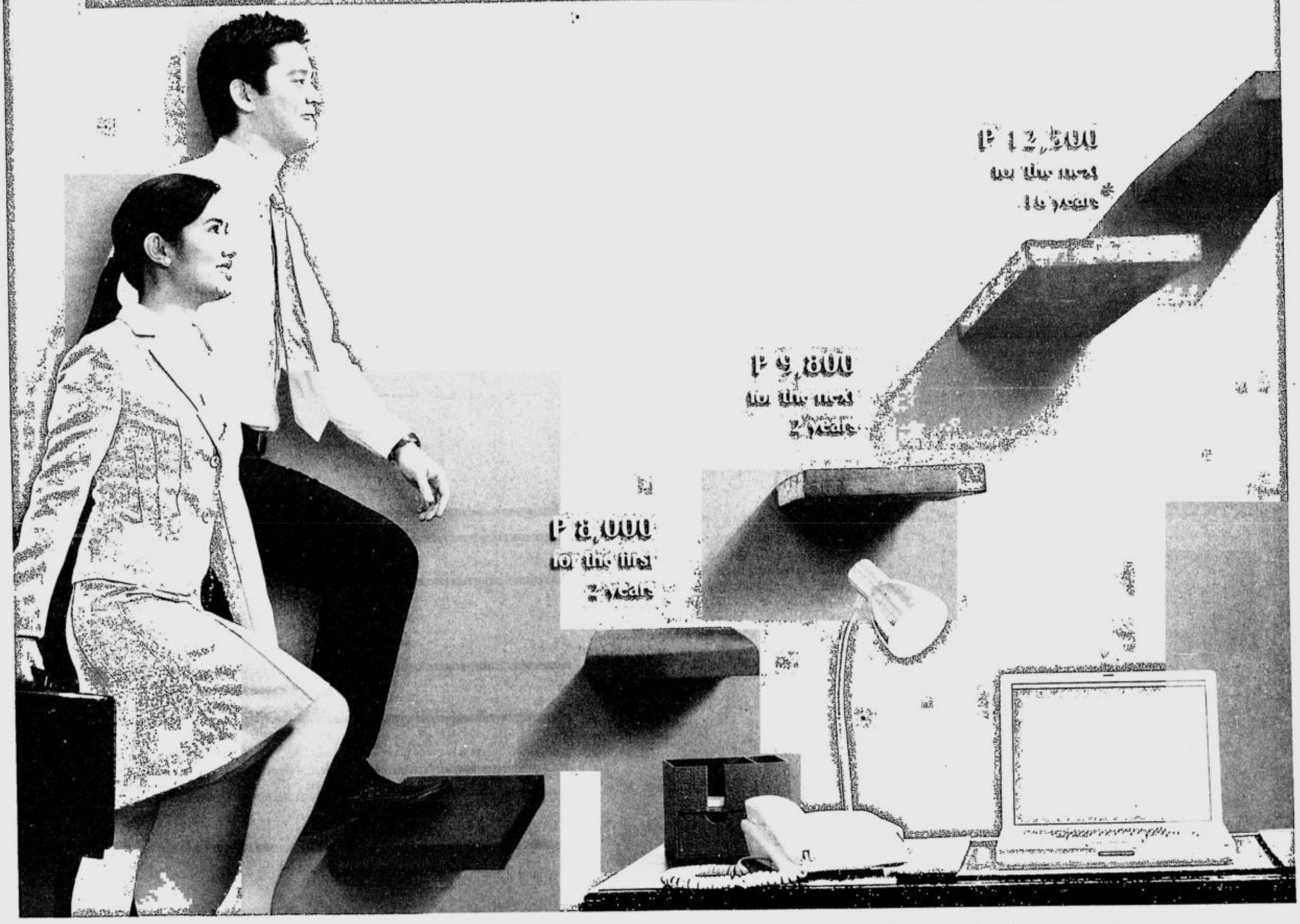

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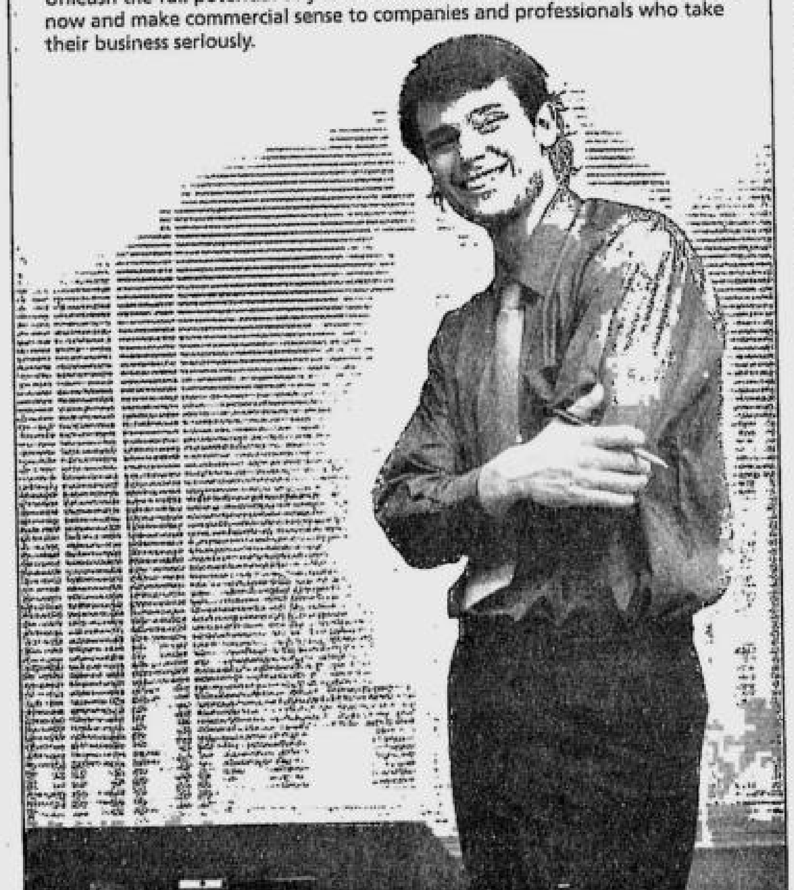

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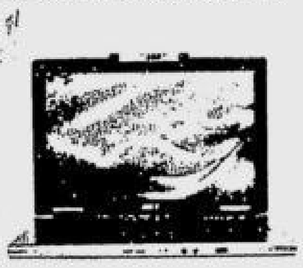

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Benpres to resolve debt issue by yearend

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

BENPRES HOLDINGS CORP., THE HOLDing company of the Lopez family, is optimistic that it will be able to fully restructure this year its debts roughly amounting to $400 million or P18 billion, Benpres president Angel Ong said in a stockholder's meeting yesterday.

Ong said Benpres would propose to its bank creditors that it would settle its debts by paying cash raised from the sale of assets, and stretching the repayment period of the loans to 12 years from 10 years.

In June 2002, Benpres was able to bring down its debt from P31 billion or $560 million.

"It is now imperative for us to resolve Benpres' debt issue," Benpres chair Oscar Lopez told shareholders. "We cannot properly set our vision and strategy for the future with that debt hanging like a Sword of Damocles over our heads. We must set a clear vision of what we want to be in the longer term and how we intend to get there.

"And we must communicate all of these clearly, cohesively and convincingly, in a way that enables us to be valued favorably by the market. But to do all of these, we have to rid ourselves of the shackles and uncertainty currently represented by that debt."

Ong said among Benpres' assets for sale are its stake in the Manila North Tollways Corp., through First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp. (FPIDC), Rockwell Land Corp., Digital Telecommunications Phils. and Sky Cable.

Rockwell has plans for a maiden debut at the stock market to fund its projects.

Benpres is not involved in Rockwell's initial public offering plan, although its 24.5-percent stake in Rockwell has long been identified for divestment.

Benpres has decided to junk an earlier option to retire some of its debts by swapping its shares in FPIDC and Digitel.

North Harbor, Transco in MPIC's scope

METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENTS CORP., THE Philippine holding firm of Hong Kong conglomerate First Pacific Co., plans to hasten its growth by bidding in auctions for government stakes in a major port and the national power grid, MPIC chair Manuel Pangilinan said.

To help boost this plan and raise future capital, the company has secured approval from shareholders to raise its authorized capital to P10 billion from P4 billion.

Pangilinan said MPIC is keen watching developments in the privatization of the Manila North Harbor.

PANGILINAN

"Having been involved in Nenaco (Negros Navigation Co.), it means a lot of work," Pangilinan said, referring to the acquisition and operation of the port. "We haven't seen the numbers, but it's a preliminary interest (for us). We don't have the experience and it's probably ideal for us to partner with someone. We need a partner with operating experience. Probably a local partner."

There are only two major port operators in the country—International Container Terminal Services Inc. and Asian Terminals Inc.

Pangilinan also confirmed Metro Pacific's interest in bidding for the 25-year concession of the National Transmission Corp.

When asked whether MPIC is also interested in acquiring the government's 26-percent stake in San Miguel Corp. and 28-percent stake in Manila Electric Co., Pangilinan said that the company would probably opt to study Meralco.

He said San Miguel is "more complicated" since it is weighed down by sequestration issues.

"It doesn't cost us to look," Pangilinan said of Meralco.

Aside from power and port operation, MPIC had said it was keen on expanding its portfolio of hospital investments.

Pangilinan said it may acquire one hospital this year to replicate the success of Makati Medical Center, where MPIC owns 33 percent.

"The successful experience of Makati Medical can be replicated in other hospitals, not only in Metro Manila but in other major provincial cities, and we will continue to look at infrastructure projects, expanding Maynilad's operations and (investing) in power," Pangilinan said, citing the firm's interest in Maynilad Water Services Inc., which holds the water franchise for the western part of Metro Manila. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 14, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCK	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5.1	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	12	12	11.5	11.5	40,600
71	30.5	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	69.5	71	69.5	70	1,073,100
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	71	72.5	71	72.5	5,298,000
935	630	China Banking Corp.	890	895	890	895	1,700
40	19	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Banking Corp.	38	38	38	38	100
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	400
0.83	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	5,220,000
70.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	68	70.5	68	69.5	2,647,700
56.5	30.5	Philippine National Bank	52.5	54	52	53.5	320,500
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	63	63	63	63	9,800
39.67	14.13	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	32	33	32	32	3,811,600
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	82.5	83	82	83	162,400
66	40.55	Union Bank of the Philippines	62.5	63	62	62.5	106,200
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTION					
3.81	1.72	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	3.15	3.3	3.15	3.25	479,000
1.46	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.4	1.46	1.2	1.26	7,176,000
8.8	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	8.6	8.8	8.5	8.8	959,000
7.5	3.5	Filipino Fund Inc.	6.4	7.5	6.4	7.5	21,000
0.99	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.84	0.84	300,000
1,720.00	1,500.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,680.00	1,680.00	1,680.00	1,680.00	3,480
5	4.05	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.25	4.35	4.25	4.35	14,817,000
2.95	0.99	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.9	2.95	2.85	2.9	64,000
1,005.00	210	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc	625	660	625	655	5,220
2,250.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,100.00	2,100.00	2,100.00	2,100.00	1,640
1.94	1.08	Vantage Corp	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.68	1,112,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
65	41	First Gen Corp.	64.5	65	64.5	65	421,200
88	41	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	85	85.5	84.5	85.5	1,405,600
12.75	6.9	Manila Water Co. Inc.	11.75	12	11.75	12	8,606,900
102	13.5	Manila Electric Co. "A"	96	97	95	96.5	309,200
104	20.25	Manila Electric Co. "B"	96	98	96	97.5	1,067,300
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	7,458,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.1	5.2	5	5.1	8,063,000
2.5	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	6,000
1.62	0.9	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.54	1.56	425,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5.9	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.6	77,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.28	2.3	2.26	2.26	297,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26	26.5	26	26.5	6,400
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	54.5	54.5	53	53	921,100
1.9	0.77	RFM Corp.	1.58	1.9	1.58	1.76	5,548,000
4.05	2.2	Roxas Holdings	2.32	2.42	2.32	2.4	8,884,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. "A"	66.5	66.5	66	66.5	233,200
88	68.5	San Miguel Corp. "B"	72	72.5	72	72.5	110,000
0.61	0.2	Swift Foods Inc.	0.44	0.61	0.44	0.53	3,200,000
22	15.25	Universal Robina Corp.	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	4,578,600
		CONSTRUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.8	1.07	EEI Corp	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.4	636,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.4	126,000
7	1.2	Republic Cement Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.5	5.5	20,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc	1.76	1.82	1.74	1.8	3,153,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.6	268,000
1.32	0.51	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp	1.06	1.06	1.02	1.02	794,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.41	[illegible]	[illegible]	0.37	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		HOLDING FIRMS					
3.9	1.7	A. Soriano Corp	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	72,000
0.135	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.135	0.115	0.13	428,730,000
1.16	0.18	APC Group Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.08	1.1	35,173,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.08	2.12	2.02	2.08	370,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	278,200,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "B"	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.015	71,000,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	8.8	9	8.7	8.8	2,511,000
0.017	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	148,000,000
1.2	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	1.14	1.2	1.1	1.12	3,253,000
1.5	0.085	Asia Amalgamated Holdings Corp.	1.3	1.5	1.02	1.06	831,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.6	2.6	4,188,000
16	5.6	Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc. "B"	13	15	13	15	1,100
15.25	4.5	Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc. "A"	11	15.25	11	15.25	27,300
570	272.92	Ayala Corp.	535	565	535	545	211,500
12.5	6.96	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12,000
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	142,000
5.4	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	5.3	5.4	5.1	5.2	14,327,000
9.8	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9	9.2	9	9.2	3,417,000
1.9	0.7	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. "A"	1.4	1.9	1.4	1.6	114,000
6.7	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	6.4	6.6	6.4	6.6	1,119,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12	12	11.75	11.75	206,000
2.6	0.9	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. "A"	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	40,000
2.65	1.42	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. "B"	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	20,000
0.69	0.185	Medco Holdings Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.62	0.63	1,410,000
0.88	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.65	0.67	230,000
30	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	24	26	24	25	1,744,500
9.2	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	8.2	9.2	8.2	8.9	35,964,000
5.4	1.2	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.85	3.75	3.75	351,000
0.034	0.009	Pacifica Inc. "A"	0.033	0.034	0.031	0.031	201,400,000
1.26	0.8	Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1	1.12	1	1.08	140,000
0.63	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.52	0.53	0.52	0.53	11,590,000
450	205	SM Investments Corp.	417.5	442.5	417.5	437.5	241,840
2.2	0.6	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.88	1.88	1.74	1.74	375,000
0.73	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.63	0.63	26,840,000
1.06	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	1.04	1.06	0.88	0.92	3,080,000
1.6	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	1.54	1.58	1.54	1.58	79,000
2	0.8	Vivant Corp.	1.8	2	1.8	2	18,000
0.45	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.4	0.45	0.4	0.45	73,470,000
0.68	0.155	Zeus Holdings Inc	0.68	0.68	0.65	0.66	1,230,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Co. Inc	1.76	1.78	1.74	1.78	540,000
0.92	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.86	0.92	0.81	0.81	3,160,000
17.5	8.54	Ayala Land Inc.	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.5	10,190,200
1.76	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.68	1.7	1.68	1.68	5,867,000
4.7	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.55	4.55	4.35	4.5	39,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.8	2.9	2.7	2.8	56,000
0.7	0.245	Crown Equities Inc	0.66	0.7	0.66	0.68	7,990,000
0.6	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.54	0.55	4,430,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.84	0.88	0.83	0.84	164,170,000
0.31	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.3	40,810,000
1.24	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.2	1.24	1.16	1.22	58,976,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.9	1.94	1.9	1.94	38,023,000
3	2.04	Highlands Prime Inc.	2.44	2.44	2.44	2.44	3,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. "A"	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	17,500,000
0.016	0.005	Interport Resources Corp. "B"	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	43,100,000
2	0.74	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	2	2	2	2	254,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.41	0.43	0.41	0.42	15,620,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.88	0.91	0.87	0.87	12,680,000
4.25	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	4.05	4.25	4.05	4.2	154,262,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.1	4.4	4.1	4.35	150,000
0.53	0.1	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.5	0.53	0.5	0.52	56,150,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.62	0.63	0.61	0.62	5,900,000
5.8	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.1	5.1	242,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	19.25	20	19.25	20	3,540,700
5.4	1.23	SM Development Corp.	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.2	2,784,000
14	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	13	13.5	13	13.5	4,632,700
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.78	0.83	0.78	0.8	12,550,000
0.36	0.08	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	21,930,000
4.5	0.3	Zipporah Realty Holdings Inc	4.5	4.5	3.5	3.5	22,843,000
		MEDIA					
34	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	30	31	30	31	219,400
1.14	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	20,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.12	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.52	1.52	4,289,000
1,445.00	870	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,430.00	1,435.00	1,420.00	1,425.00	328,910
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,660.00	2,705.00	2,660.00	2,695.00	399,310
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp	6.8	7.1	6.8	7.1	2,833,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	16,340,000
10.25	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	9.3	9.3	9.1	9.2	22,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	6.2	6.2	6	6	2,346,000
0.0525	0.0263	ISM Communications Corp.	0.04	0.045	0.04	0.043	222,700,000
2.9	1.8	Ionics Inc.	2.16	2.4	2.1	2.28	6,173,000
0.0875	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.08	0.0825	0.08	0.08	31,100,000
1.9	1.12	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.84	1.9	1.84	1.86	671,000
0.06	0.027	Philweb Corp.	0.0525	0.0575	0.05	0.0575	1,468,400,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.46	2.5	2.32	2.44	1,512,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.88	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.7	1.72	500,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	6	6.2	6	6	410,000
32	12.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	28	28.5	28	28.5	1,247,000
2.14	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.88	2.04	1.88	2	1,057,000
1.74	0.8	Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	19,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
16.5	3.8	Acesite (Phils.) Hotel Corp	7.2	8	7.2	8	9,100
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.4	3.4	1,172,000
4.55	2.8	Philippine Racing Club Inc.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	5,000
0.98	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.91	0.92	0.89	0.92	7,710,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc	1.08	1.08	1.04	1.04	824,000
		EDUCATION					
966.67	650	Far Eastern University Inc.	850	850	850	850	30
3.7	2.65	iPeople Inc	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	550,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
7.5	2.75	Easycall Comm. Phils. Inc.	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	5,000
41	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	27	27.5	27	27.5	1,500
5.2	1.86	Macroasia Corp.	4.85	4.95	4.8	4.9	1,053,000
17.25	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	15.75	16	15.75	16	182,500
30	9.5	Parys Inc	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	342,200
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.015	734,900,000
7.6	3	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	345,000
7.7	3	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4	426,000
21.25	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	17.75	18.25	17.75	18.25	2,983,600
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. "A"	13	13.25	13	13.25	81,300
5	1.7	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	4.7	4.7	4.4	4.4	226,000
2.85	0.0602	Geograce Resources Philippines Inc.	2.48	2.55	2.4	2.42	92,132,000
0.35	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	11,600,000
0.42	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	670,000
0.038	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.035	0.035	0.034	0.035	89,100,000
0.041	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.036	0.036	0.036	0.036	56,600,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.02	0.021	0.02	0.02	515,600,000
6.4	2.85	Philex Mining Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.9	1,789,000
30	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	26.5	27	26.5	26.5	176,000
1.36	0.29	United Paragon Mining Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.22	1.22	2,546,000
1.8	0.43	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp	1.5	1.5	1.44	1.44	5,745,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc	0.42	0.45	0.42	0.43	17,580,000
0.025	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.024	345,100,000
0.027	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.026	71,100,000
14.62	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	62,500
0.028	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.026	204,700,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

CURRENCIES

June 14, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.751428	1.000000	46.5940
Japan	Yen	0.006124	0.008150	0.3797
United Kingdom	Pound	1.482492	1.972900	91.9253
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096159	0.127969	5.9626
Switzerland	Franc	0.603508	0.803148	37.4219
Canada	Dollar	0.704970	0.938174	43.7133
Singapore	Dollar	0.487338	0.648550	30.2185
Australia	Dollar	0.630975	0.839701	39.1250
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.993336	2.652731	123.6013
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.200381	0.266667	12.4251
Brunei	Dollar	0.485763	0.646454	30.1209
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000110	0.0051
Thailand	Baht	0.023178	0.030845	1.4372
UAE	Dirham	0.204604	0.272287	12.6869
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.330800	62.0073
Korea	Won	0.000807	0.001074	0.0500
China	Yuan**	0.098406	0.130959	6.1019
ArgentinaPeso	0.244566	0.325468	15.1649	
Brazil	Real	0.386437	0.514271	23.9619
Denmark	Kroner	0.134294	0.178718	8.3272
India	Rupee	0.018494	0.024612	1.1468
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216425	0.288018	13.4199
Mexico	New Peso	0.068812	0.091575	4.2668
New Zealand	Dollar	0.563500	0.749906	34.9411
South Africa	Rand	0.103609	0.137883	6.4245
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022746	0.030271	1.4104

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—June 13, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of June 13, 2007

Policies at the root of NFA problems

By Amy R. Remo

WRONG POLICIES, and not the National Food Authority's structure, are the root of the cash-strapped agency's problems which have resulted in accumulating losses over the past years, according to Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.

According to Yap, he has been telling economic managers that "the most important reform you can do to NFA is to revisit its mandate more than the structure."

The NFA has been mandated to ensure food security in times and places of calamity or emergency, as well as stabilize the supply and prices of grains, both at the farm-gate and consumer levels.

Yap cited an Australian study, which pointed out that NFA's losses are basically due to policy considerations rather than operations.

"They're saying that NFA is such a money loser, but if you look at the expenses of NFA, only 20 percent are from operations and 80 percent are (a result of) wrong policies," Yap said.

Although he did not mention the specific policies in question, Yap said the department would seek to correct the erring policies through various bills the agriculture agency has filed with Congress.

"We're waiting for Congress to pass the bill that will reform the NFA because there is a need to rationalize its functions," Yap said. Is NFA a trading corporation or a buffer stock corporation?"

He added that the rationalization of functions is important to identify which specific role the NFA should take.

For instance, he said, is the provision of rice during times of calamity the job of the NFA or the National Disaster Coordinating Council?

He also asked if it is the job of the NFA or the Department of Trade and Industry to deliver rice to various markets so as to stabilize supply.

Yap added that the department should also study the policy considerations of subsidizing rice, especially their impact on the country's core inflation.

Yap earlier said the NFA is waiting for proposals from the banking sector for the refinancing of its loans worth P16.5 billion.

The loans were originally structured and financed in 2003 using zero coupon bonds and are currently used as collateral for NFA's debts.

Yap said that they are expecting to generate about P25 billion from the sale of the bonds, the proceeds of which would be partly used to retire the P16.5-billion loan. The rest would be invested in warehouses and drying facilities, such as those for corn.

PRULINK	PRU LIFE U.K.	
Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Current Week June 12, 2007	Last Week June 05, 2007
Bond Fund - Peso	1.60965	1.62040
Managed Fund - Peso	1.90229	1.91643
Growth Fund - Peso	1.91734	1.94188
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.3709	1.3932

* Note These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission

INSULAR LIFE — Wealth Builder and Wealth Secure	Investment Funds of Wealth Builder & Wealth Secure — UNIT PRICES (In Php)	
	June 8, 2007	June 4, 2007
Fixed Income Fund	1.269519	1.280121
Balanced Fund	1.465406	1.479109
Equity Fund	1.788850	1.807358

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

The weekly unit prices are also available at www.insularlife.com.ph.

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BOI, CITEM and BETP government officials visits PLDT INNOLAB

PLDT Innolab, the Innovation Laboratory and Telecommunications Education Center of PLDT was recently visited by the officers of the Board of Investments (BOI), the lead government agency responsible for the promotion of investment in the Phils.; Bureau of Export Trade Promotion (BETP), an agency that delivers timely and relevant information and assistance to exporters and would-be exporters and Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM), the export promotions agency of DTI.

PLDT Innolab is a showroom and test laboratory of PLDT's wide range of products and solutions that would cater to the needs of the Business Sector, Government and the Academe. The tour showcases how technology can help develop the country as a world-class ICT provider and help the country be in the forefront of progress. BOI, BETP and CITEM will be bringing prospective investors to PLDT Innolab to assure these investors of a reliable telecommunications network infrastructure.

Shown in photo from L-R are: James Yap, BOI Europe Desk OIC-Chief,; Cely Clor, BOI Asia Desk Chief; Jeanette Carrillo, BOI Business Development Manager of ICT Services; Domingo Bagaporo, BOI Director of Elec. & ICT Dept.; Suzie Manrique, BETP Sr. Trade and Industry Dev't Specialist and Rowena Mendoza, CITEM OIC of Operations Division.

Second row from L-R : Joey Limjap, PLDT AVP and Head of Corp. Solutions Development; Pie Dominguez, BOI Japan Desk OIC-Chief; Malou Mediran, CITEM Deputy Executive. Director and Ignacio Sevillo, PLDT Innolab Administrator.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0373 Series of 2007

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National Capital Region
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cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
EDUTOS ENGLISH INTERNATIONAL, INC. 1040 EDSA Magallanes Village, Makati City	Chang Hwan Kwag	Marketing Assistant
FUJI MACHINE PHILS. INC. Warehouse 888, Don Mariano Lim Industrial Complex, Alabang-Zapote Rd., Almanza Uno, Las Piñas City	Takashi Miyazaki	Deputy General Manager
E-WORLD TRAVEL & TOURS PHIL. CORP. Unit 1005 Pearl of the Orient Tower, Roxas Blvd., Manila	Youngho Jang	Operations Manager
FIL-ASIAN STRATEGIC RESOURCES & PROPERTIES CORPORATION Unit 2203, 22/F The Peak Tower, 107 L.P. Leviste St., Salcedo Vill., Makati City	Robert Gordon Matthews Gregory	Director/Chairman of the Board
HSBC ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING (PHILIPPINES) INC. 5150 North Bridgeway, Northgate Cyberzone, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Michael Villanueva	Vice President Learning and Development
CHEVRON MALAMPAYA LLC 8/F Asian Star Bldg., Filinvest Corp. City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Azamat Yertayuly Oraz	Finance and Planning Manager
L.I.B.Y. INT'L. SALES, INC. 430 L.T. Artiaga St., San Juan, Metro Manila	Qihua Li	Cook
YBM PHILIPPINES LEARNING CENTERS INC. Indo-China Drive, Northgate Cyberzone Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Jaeseong Cho	Administrator
YAN-LY INT'L. TRADING CORP. 288 Escolta St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Qun Lin	Purchasing Manager
GOD' S RESOURCES TRADING CORPORATION 952 Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Lihua Yang	Product Manager
CHINA NATIONAL TECHNICAL IMPORT & EXPORT CORPORATION U-901, 9/F West Tower, PSE Ctr., Exchange Rd., Ortigas Ctr., San Antonio, Pasig City	Yu Zhao	Deputy Chief Representative
UNILEVER PHILIPPINES, INC. 1351 U.N. Ave., Manila	Cevdet Zafer Unver	Managing Director, Foodsolutions
UNITOP GENERAL MERCHANDISE INC. 5006 Sto. Rosario St., Mapulang Lupa, Valenzuela City	Yiche Lin	Manager
UNITOP GENERAL MERCHANDISE INC. 5006 Sto. Rosario St., Mapulang Lupa, Valenzuela City	Shijie Lin	General Manager
KUMAR SOHAL TRADING CORPORATION 47 Arasity St., Little Baguio, Tenejeros St., Malabon City	Kulvinder Singh	Finance Manager
VONOTEC, INC. 5/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Henri Jacques Muzzarelli	Vice President Business Development
IBM DAKSH BUSINESS PROCESS SERVICES PHILIPPINES INCORPORATED 30/F PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Ajit Gupta	Chief Financial Officer
CLIENTLOGIC PHILIPPINES, INC. 22/F Wynsum Corporate Tower, Emerald Ave., Ortigas, Pasig City	Clive Geoffrey Linssen	VP Operations
ENGLISH TRAINING ONLINE INTERNATIONAL CENTER CORPORATION 7/F Pearl Plaza, Pearl Drive, Pasig City	Jee Hye Kim	Operations Manager
ENGLISH TRAINING ONLINE INTERNATIONAL CENTER CORPORATION 7/F Pearl Plaza, Pearl Drive, Pasig City	Ha Young Yun	Admin. Manager
ZTE PHILIPPINES INC. 25/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Guoqiang Sun	Project Manager
ZTE PHILIPPINES INC. 25/F Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Yu Su	Technical Manager

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

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LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–June 15, 2007)

Local airlines move to keep standards high, fares low

Training new pilots, ensuring better work environment

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE PILOT CORPS OF CEBU PACIFIC AIR Inc. was not spared when foreign airlines decimated the ranks of the local aviators by poaching them at rates triple their salaries.

And unlike Philippine Airlines, which has its own flying school and the financial muscle to pirate pilots from smaller operators, the Gokongwei firm's razor thin margins as a low-cost carrier did not afford it the same luxury.

What it did to solve the problem of pilot supply was nothing short of novel.

Invest in training

"We decided that we needed to invest in training new pilots from scratch," said Cebu Pacific vice president for flight operations Capt. Victor Custodio. "We needed a program that could supply us with pilots fast, without sacrificing quality."

This called for an investment in a flight simulator that could help students with absolutely no flying experience train to operate the Airbus A320—all while keeping the airline's entire fleet in active duty.

The airline paid $15 million for the computerized flight simulator—a mock-up of an aircraft cockpit—and teamed up with expatriate pilots of Clark Aviation in Pampanga for a training program that could create newly minted A320 co-pilots in only a year.

"What we have is a program that cuts through all the things that we don't need from traditional pilot training," Custodio said.

"Before, it took a pilot almost five years to accumulate 1,500 [flying] hours. With our multi-crew pilot license [program] he can accumulate this inside the simulator," he said, adding that the experience inside the flight simulator is 99-percent faithful to actual flying experience—and a lot safer.

Coupled with an improved benefits program for its crew, the investment in flight simulator training allows Cebu Pacific to have a steady stream of pilots for its fleet, regardless of the high piracy rates by foreign airlines.

It also allows the airline to offer cheaper airfare to the flying public.

Without the training program, Cebu Pacific would have to poach pilots from other airlines at inflated wages—which would eventually be passed on to the consumers.

AN ASPIRING pilot checks out Cebu Pacific's flight simulator as his instructor looks on.

Cebu Pacific's tack is by no means unique.

Philippine Airlines has also adopted the same tack, but through the traditional way. "We are aware of the growing demand for pilots so we increased our training rate," PAL president Jaime J. Bautista said, adding that the company's emphasis had been on increasing the number of cadet pilots at its school.

Exodus of pilots subsiding

"We are now training 40 to 50 pilots a year to make up for the 40 that we have recently lost," he said. PAL also doubled its fleet of aircraft for basic training to accommodate the additional cadets.

PAL had complained about the high turnover rate of its pilots. This forced the airline to raise by 50 percent its salary levels--which used to be at $4,000 to $7,000 per month--last year.

Foreign airlines could easily get pilots with packages that start at $10,000 a month.

For both carriers, the solution seems to have worked.

In an interview, Bautista said the exodus of pilots had subsided to a 'manageable level.'

He said PAL was expecting to lose only 10 pilots this year, all to retirement, compared to 22 pilots in 2004, 28 in 2005, and 15 in early 2006—a big dent on its headcount of 450 pilots.

There are only about 700 registered pilots in the country.

Better work environment

Cebu Pacific's Custodio said a similar increase in his airline's non-wage benefits had succeeded in reducing the attrition rate among its 180-strong pilot corps.

Custodio agrees that the airline's investment in a flight simulator—the only one of its kind n the country—marks a significant outlay for the budget carrier.

He said, however, that the approach was necessary for the company to maintain a level of safety and to offer cheap airfare in an increasingly cutthroat industry.

Beauty products maker focuses on Bicol

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE BODY SHOP IS NOT ALL about making its customers look, feel and smell good.

Around the world, it has developed its business around five core values: Against animal testing, support community trade, activate self esteem, defend human rights and protect the planet.

Rebuilding schools

Its operation in the Philippines is no different, and this came to fore late last year when it launched its "Help Rebuild Bicol" campaign in the aftermath of super typhoon Reming.

The campaign calls for the repair of school rooms badly damaged or destroyed by one of the strongest typhoons to hit Albay.

By doing so, it hopes to: Help bring normalcy in the lives of calamity survivors, particularly the children; ensure continuity in the children's education and put them on a path to a good future, and inspire private firms to contribute to the rehabilitation efforts.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

The Body Shop corporate values group officer Karen Betita says the company had always been involved in children's education, especially in the Philippines where it has a long-running scholarship program.

ONE OF the school buildings to be rebuilt by The Body Shop.

It turned its attention to Bicol because the gravity of the situation in the province had compelled it to do so.

It also realized that the private sector had to step in because the government had its hands full dealing with relief operations and infrastructure repairs.

"Amid reports that 90 percent of the schools in the area were severely damaged, it seemed but natural for the company to offer repair and rebuilding assistance," Betita tells the INQUIRER.

Children's education

She adds that the school building program fulfills TBS' values of activating self-esteem and defending human rights.

"Activate self-esteem is after all about empowerment. The value advocates the promotion of self-awareness, self-confidence, self-worth and self-acceptance. It encourages personal development and freedom so people can be anything they want to be," Betita says.

"Defend human rights, meanwhile, is about actively supporting those who have human rights denied to them. This includes the children's right to an education," she adds.

TBS contacted the Department of Education as early as December 2006, offering to help repair the school houses.

It even submitted detailed work plans and appointed a contractor to do the work at the selected school.

TBS had proposed to rebuild 36 school rooms of the Camalig North Central School which were severely damaged by the typhoon.

Funds permitting, it plans to rebuild two more totally damaged school rooms.

Setting an example

"Through this initiative, TBS Philippines hopes to awaken the private sector on the realities in Bicol. There is still a lot that needs to be done and can be done. And, each one can certainly help make a difference," she says.

Betita says construction began last April 29 and the company hopes to complete it by July.

"Overall, we have the continued patronage of our customers, along with the support of our hardworking employees and counterparts abroad, and the different contributions of various members of the community to thank for the Bicol school repair project and for all our other socio-civic projects. After all, it is through everyone's concerted efforts that we are able to continue to operate and make a difference," she says.

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NISSAN

Merchandise export growth slows to 5%

Despite lower April rate, Neda keeps full-year target of 11%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY MANAGED TO POST growth in exports in April but at a lower rate of 5 percent, with total shipments hitting $4.11 billion from year-ago's $3.9 billion.

The decline in the growth rate from 7.3 percent in March could be attributed to the easing of global demand for electronics, the National Statistics Office said.

Electronics exports, the country's top dollar earner, hit $2.56 billion in April, up by only 1.1 percent from the $2.53 billion recorded a year ago. This paled in comparison to the 8.7 percent growth in electronics exports in March.

For the first four months of the year, total exports rose 8.1 percent to $16.30 billion from year-ago's $15.07 billion, way off the full-year growth target of 11 percent.

Analysts said the lower-than-expected growth in exports was due to the slowdown in the US economy, the country's biggest export destination.

According to the NSO, the United States accounted for 15.4 percent, or $634.59 million, of the Philippines' export earnings for April.

Jonathan Ravelas, market strategist at Banco de Oro, said that while the Philippines had already diversified its export markets, the United States remained its biggest market. This means that a slowdown in the US economy still has a considerable impact on Philippine exports.

Also, Ravelas said consumers were probably opting to delay their purchases of electronic goods.

"People could have been delaying their purchases to wait for the next best thing in consumer electronics," he said.

The analyst also said the appreciation of the peso had an adverse impact on demand for electronics.

Exporters said the peso strengthening had made Philippine-made products more expensive in dollar terms and, therefore, less competitive.

The peso broke into the 47-to-a-dollar territory in April and further to the 46-to-$1 mark in May due to strong dollar inflows. Despite the first four-month performance and projections of a US slowdown, however, the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said it was keeping the official export growth target of 11 percent for this year.

The Neda said the likely rise in demand for electronics from other export markets would make the 11-percent growth goal achievable.

The country's other major exports in April were: apparel and clothing accessories ($163.16 million); cathodes and sections of cathodes of refined copper ($101.84 million); petroleum products ($91.06 million); woodcraft and furniture ($85.91 million); wiring sets ($70.96 million); coconut oil ($65.61 million), bananas ($37.10 million), and metal components ($34.87 million).

The other major destinations of Philippine goods in April were Japan ($579.62 million), Netherlands ($531.82 million), Hong Kong ($507.53 million), China ($417.11 million), Singapore ($222.12 million), Taiwan ($184.26 million), Malaysia ($180.98 million), Germany ($147.43 million), and Korea ($144 million).

Power rates should reflect production cost, says Napocor

By Abigail L. Ho

STATE-RUN NATIONAL POWER Corp. is urging the Energy Regulatory Commission to come out with a tariff scheme for power generation, transmission and distribution companies that will reflect the true cost of producing and delivering power.

"What we have in mind is a mechanism that will balance, protect and address the interests and welfare of the players in the industry, especially the consumers. The ERC should take the lead in coming out with this pricing scheme," Napocor said in a statement.

It said a number of issues in the current pricing scheme had to be addressed, chief of which was the "regulatory lag" in the recovery of costs related to fuel procurement and foreign exchange.

The deferred accounting adjustments such as the generation rate adjustment mechanism (GRAM) and the incremental currency exchange rate adjustment (Icera) affect the present pricing scheme, it added.

These pricing issues should be addressed by the continued implementation of RA 9136, or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (Epira), as well as through the proposed amendments to this law.

Napocor said the various reforms being implemented under the Epira were geared toward the establishment of a competitive Philippine Electricity Supply Industry (Pesi). An appropriate pricing structure should go with this.

"Having a competitive market-driven pricing mechanism and a strong regulatory body to oversee the processes involved in price determination will benefit the consumers, businesses and industries," the state firm said.

For its part, Napocor said it would also constantly improve its systems to ensure delivery of adequate power to its customers.

High-end outsourcing next growth area in RP

IBM PHILIPPINES IS EXPECTING a sustained growth in its workforce as more companies seek service providers for business processes that do things better and cheaper.

Erich Clementi, IBM Corp. general manager for managed business process services, said in a briefing that the value that technology had been providing was going over toward processes rather isolated tasks.

"There is also the globatization of talent (and of jobs) as well as the increasing drive for companies to be distinguished in the market," said Clementi, who is based in the United States.

"These factors are going to be the trend for the long-term and firms who outsource are turning to (service providers) that transform their business rather than just helping them reduce costs," he added.

He was referring to business transformation outsourcing or BTO, as opposed to business process outsoucing or BPO, in which IBM has made innovations to become the preferred provider.

BTO means an outside provider goes beyond doing a business function for a client, to cover such functions that require innovations and best practices.

IBM describes BTO as providing end-to-end services, following through in the process and not just a one-shot delivery function.

Randy Walker, IBM general manager in the Asia Pacific, said the Philippines was one of three core locations for the firm's BTO services—along with China and India. IBM's local workforce has grown to 5,000 or some 14 percent of IBM's global workforce.

"This is due to the skills that are available here as well as (our clients') awareness about the tradition of service in the Philippines," Walker said. "IBM Philippines serves 12 clients or more than a third of the global (portfolio)."

Walker explained that the company's biggest jobs were in customer relationship management and human resources, but that it expects finance and administration jobs to grow faster in the coming years.

IBM is also offering BTO services in supply chain management and procurement; banking back office; insurance claims processing; integrated service management; and road user charging.

According to Peter Lynt, IBM vice president, the firm's Philippine workforce grew 1,000 percent in 2006 and 60 percent so far this year.

Lynt said IBM was working with local universities like the Asia Pacific College to help produce graduates with skills that industries needed.

He said the Philippines had vast opportunities in BTO considering that 100,000 graduates yearly have skills in finance and administration, 3,000 of which are certified public accountants.

Increased budget for DA cheered

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

LAST JUNE 12 FELT LIKE A SPECIAL Independence Day for the small farmers and fisherfolk because an announcement was made that promised the start of their independence from poverty.

After what they perceived as nine years of neglect, many applauded Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap's bold announcement that he would propose a P32.7-billion 2008 budget for the Department of Agriculture (DA).

When too rapid liberalization took place and our own tariff reductions were even more severe than what the World Trade Organization (WTO) required, the farmers and fisherfolk staged several rallies.

They were placated by the promise of safety nets and a well-crafted agricultural law spearheaded by Sen. Edgardo Angara.

This was the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997.

Since then, things have gotten worse instead of better.

Instead of being a net exporter of agricultural products, we are now a net importer.

And the promised significant increase in agricultural jobs never materialized.

The farmers and fisherfolk felt betrayed. The promises of safety nets proved empty. Afma was never properly implemented. And only last August 2006, the recommended P46.4-billion supplemental budget did not include even one peso for agriculture.

COMMENTARY

Afma budget

Given the understanding that Afma should jumpstart our agricultural growth, an additional budget of P20 billion for the first year (1998) was identified.

This included specific amounts for key areas such as irrigation, post-harvest facilities, marketing, credit and research and development.

For the succeeding six years, Section 112 of Afma states: "The Department of Budget and Management is hereby mandated to include annually for the next six years an amount not less than P17 billion for implementation of this act."

Yesterday, at the Alyansa Agrikultura meeting, with its 42-member federations and organizations representing all major agriculture sectors, a farmer leader formulated and presented the table below.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE BUDGET

YEAR	AFMA	ACTUAL	DIFFERENCE
1997	P17.2 B	P17.2 B	0
1998	P35.7 B	P15.7 B	P20.0 B
1999	P32.7 B	P15.0 B	P17.2 B
2000	P32.7 B	P20.8 B	P11.9 B
2001	P32.7 B	P16.1 B	P16.6 B
2002	P32.7 B	P20.0 B	P12.7 B
2003	P32.7 B	P16.6 B	P16.1 B
2004	P32.7 B	P13.6 B	P19.1 B
2005	P32.7 B	P14.5 B	P18.2 B
2006	P32.7 B	P15.8 B	P16.9 B
2007	P32.7 B	P19.3 B	P13.4 B
ACCUMULATED DIFFERENCE			P162.1B

From this table, we note that the DA proposed budget announced last June 12 is exactly what the DA should have gotten for the last nine years.

The actual amounts given to DA, however, are far below this amount. This is why the farmers and fisherfolk feel betrayed.

Those who argue that Secretary Yap's P32.7-billion proposal is too much should look at the sad state of our agriculture and the Afma law.

Even if the P32.7 billion is given for 2008, there is still the accumulated difference of P162.1 billion that the DA never got over the last nine years.

It is said that the best way to attain peace is not through arms but through development. The DND budget for this year is P54.3 billion, almost three times the DA's budget of P19.3 billion.

Thailand's Ministry of Agriculture's budget is more than P90 billion, more than four times our DA budget. It is clear that our DA budget should be significantly increased.

Two conditions

However, if the additional DA budget is used improperly, this budget should be disapproved by the new Congress. Two conditions for the DA budget must therefore be met.

The first condition is that the programs must actually help the agricultural sector and not be used for political largesse and even corruption.

One mechanism toward this end is to subject all proposed programs to the discipline of looking at the social, economic and financial returns of investment (ROIs), in the same way the National Economic Development Authority (Neda) reviews projects.

In the irrigation area, Secretary Yap is to be commended for announcing that the P4 billion in additional irrigation money will be spent to repair irrigation canals, and not to build new ones.

From an ROI point of view, this is definitely going in the right direction. It costs 10 times more to build a new irrigation system than to repair an existing one.

The second condition is a transparent system to ensure accountability for these funds.

Such a system has also been provided by law, but has not been implemented. The legislated National Agriculture and Fishery Councils (NAFC) are government-private sector bodies that have never been given the opportunity to look at DA budget utilization. This should start immediately.

Recommendations

We recommend that the new Congress look at the DA as a critical development force and approve the proposed P32.7-billion budget.

They should also provide for mechanisms such as the use of ROI criteria, as well as ensuring a transparent system that will provide accountability.

Finally, instead of just calling DA officials during budget deliberations, both Houses of Congress should likewise call on farmer and fisherfolk leaders.

After all, they are the ones who feel betrayed by the previous inadequate and sometimes inappropriate DA budgets. It is time for their voices to be heard.

(The author is the chair of Agriwatch, former Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary for agriculture, and trade and industry. For inquiries and suggestions, email agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 8522112).

Transco seen earning from carbon credits

By Abigail L. Ho

REDUCING TRANSMISSION LOSSES WILL not only cut the selling rates of the National Transmission Corp. but will also allow it to sell carbon credits to developed countries that have to comply with the Kyoto Protocol.

Arnold Bufi, country representative of global carbon credits brokerage EcoSecurities, said the drop in the state firm's transmission losses would mean less greenhouse gas emissions that would, in turn, generate carbon credits.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, of which the Philippines is one of the 163 signatories, firms that invest in renewable energy, energy efficiency, improved land use, forestry and agricultural practices, and methane control programs will generate emission credits that can be traded for or developed into financial instruments.

The same protocol requires developed countries to limit their greenhouse gas emissions, but at the same time allows them to purchase carbon credits that they can use to offset their excess carbon emission.

Bufi added that Transco could generate even more carbon credits by reducing its use of a gas called SF6 or sulfur hexafluoride.

SF6 is widely used by power transmission and distribution companies to insulate high-voltage electrical equipment such as substations, circuit breakers and switchgears.

He said EcoSecurities last week briefed Transco officials, including president and chief executive Arthur Aguilar, regarding possible carbon emission reduction programs that would allow the state firm to cash in on carbon credits.

Aguilar and the other officials were quite "receptive" to the idea, he said.

There was no estimate yet of how much revenue Transco would be able to generate from carbon credits, however.

The Philippines as a whole can generate between $21 million and $100 million a year in the next five years from the sale of carbon credits due to investments in renewable energy.

RP not surrendering land to Chinese firms, Yap says

By Amy R. Remo

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY ARTHUR C. YAP yesterday said that the country was "not offering and surrendering land for Chinese investments" but rather, only facilitating the entry of Chinese investments.

In an answer to the paid ad of the Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya, Yap said in a briefing yesterday that the government had committed to assist foreign investors of any nationality in locating agribusiness lands where they can invest.

According to the ad that came out two days ago, these RP-China farm agreements were "another act of national betrayal" that would make the country's agricultural sector an "appendage of the Chinese economy."

It added that the "deals are not projects for small farmer development nor for the completion of the agrarian reform. Neither are they meant for capacity-building to enable Filipino agribusiness growers to export to China."

Yap clarified that these agreements were "private sector contracts" and that the government had not released money nor extended any bonds.

"These RP-China business deals are not 'unconstitutional' nor 'insane.' It's a great way to develop agriculture especially since there have not been too many investments given to this sector," Yap said.

These 17 agreements, which cover biofuels, agribusiness and fisheries, were made in January this year during the Asean Leaders' Summit.

There were originally 19 agreements. However, the other two did not push through.

According to Eugenia Go, DA's China desk officer, these "deals" are agreements for these Chinese companies to come to the Philippines and invest in the agriculture sector.

People, Events & Products

Panaf-DLSPS-GSB offers brand activation course

THE PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF National Advertisers Foundation (Panaf) is offering a course on Brand Activation. This course is part of the Post Graduate Diploma Program in Marketing Communications Management offered in partnership with De La Salle Professional Schools-Ramon V. del Rosario Sr Graduate School of Business.

The course is designed for managers who are responsible for product services, marketing, business development, or sales channel management. A special session on Social Marketing will also be most helpful to those involved in this line of marketing or are looking at new career options.

The course will give the participants full appreciation on the use of various Brand Activation tools in planning and implementing an Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) program. It is designed to provide outstanding learning by combining theories with actual case studies that best illustrate Brand Activation strategies and techniques that will have immediate practical application back on the job.

All of the sessions are designed to be highly interactive, allowing for the substantial experience of the group to emerge and be shared. Best practices on Brand Activation will also be tackled by discussants and resource speakers tapped from companies and organizations with extensive experience in these fields such as Bobby Sumulong-IMC program director, Rod Nepomuceno-managing director, Crush Philippines, Norman Agatep-managing director and chief creative officer, Euro-RSG, Jennifer Joy Santos-head, core services, Globe Telecom Inc, and Ernie Hernandez-president and CEO, Well Advertising & Marketing Inc.

As a result of attending this course, the participants will learn the dynamic applications of Brand Activation techniques within the context of IMC Management. They will also acquire and develop innovative marketing tools to support their company's future marketing initiatives and learn about future trends in Brand Activation techniques from leading professionals and practitioners in the field. Hence, they will also be able to establish a network of marketing peers who can be excellent support resources in the future.

The course will be capped by group project presentations that will showcase the participants' mastery of the various brand activation tools in an actual marketing case.

The course will run every Thursday (6 to 9 p.m.) from June 21 to Sep. 20 at the RCBC Plaza in Ayala Avenue, Makati City. Furthermore, completion of the entire program entitles the graduate to credits in the pre-MBA courses in the De La Salle Professional Schools-Graduate School of Business (DLSPS-GSB) regular MBA Program, provided that he/she meets all admission requirements. For inquiries, visit or call: DLSPS-GSB, 5/F Tower II, RCBC Plaza, Ayala Avenue, Makati City; Tel. No.: 7534611-18 loc. 105. Look for Lainna Pangyarihan.

METROBANK CITED FOR GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co (Metrobank), the country's largest bank in assets, was honorably mentioned in the 2007 The Asset Awards for Best in Corporate Governance. Metrobank first vice president Alex Lim (left) received the award from The Asset chief editor Daniel Yu. The Asset Corporate Governance Ranking is based on a six-month survey conducted from September 2006 to March 2007. Participating companies were asked to complete a questionnaire on their adherence to the basic principles of corporate governance. Institutional investors were likewise asked to vote on their choices of companies that practice good corporate governance. Capping off the selection process is a series of dialogues conducted by The Asset with senior executives to understand their respective approaches to corporate governance.

OLYMPIC VILLAGE IS AYALA MALLS MERCHANT REWARDS WINNER

Olympic Village was recognized as Visual Merchandising Excellence winner in the 2007 Ayala Malls Merchant Rewards Program which was held at the Greenbelt 3 Park in Makati. The award was conferred for the Junior Anchor Category of the Alabang Town Center which is among the premiere Ayala malls. Olympic Village has 20 branches nationwide and is in the business of retailing branded 'ath-leisure' footwear, apparel and accessories. Shown is Jose Dela Cruz, visual merchandiser and Robert Abesamis, chief operating officer

Kia Sorento, Carnival top TQI

KIA MOTORS CORP RECENTLY announced that the 2007 Kia Sorento and Carnival (known as Sedona in some countries) both received top honors in Strategic Vision's 2007 Total Quality Index (TQI), leading the mid-size SUV and MPV segments respectively. Kia, one of the fastest growing automakers in the world, is also the most improved brand overall from last year's TQI survey. The US-based research firm calculates their results based on the overall ownership experience of a vehicle.

Strategic Vision surveyed more than 27,700 new car owners who purchased their 2007 vehicles during the October-December 2006 period, focusing on the first 90 days of vehicle ownership. The Total Quality Index is the premier measure of new vehicle ownership in the United States, and assesses total ownership experience, encompassing positive and negative product experiences, reliability, dealership experience and emotional attachment to a vehicle.

"The Total Quality Index is a nice feather in our cap, as it is based directly on consumer feedback," said Len Hunt, executive vice president and COO, KMA. "We are proud that the Sorento and Carnival have been recognized; they serve as prime examples of the continued effort Kia is making toward creating quality vehicles."

The 2007 Sorento also earned a five-star crash safety rating, the highest rating possible, for all seating positions in the latest frontal and side impact crash tests conducted by the US Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), while the 2007 Carnival (Sedona) was selected by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) as one of only 13 vehicles to earn the "Top Safety Pick" award for its impressive performance with top ratings in frontal, side and rear impact crash tests, and was named the "Safest Minivan Ever Tested" by the organization.

The Carnival (Sedona) has also picked up the 2007 MotorWeek "Best Minivan" award in its 2007 Drivers' Choice Awards, while both the Sorento and Carnival (Sedona), along with six other Kia models, picked up The Car Book 2007's "Best Bet" distinction. Overall, Kia models improved 22 percent in JD Power and Associates 2006 Initial Quality Study (IQS), and improved twice as much as any competitor in the last three years, showing how the company continues to offer world-class quality and award-winning customer satisfaction.

Trisco complies with net worth requirement

ONE OF THE FAST-EMERGING NON-LIFE INsurance companies has complied June 1 with the P100-million net worth requirement which the Insurance Commission imposes upon non-life insurance companies for the renewal of their Certificates of Authority (to operate) for the current year pursuant to the IC's Department Order 27-06.

Travellers Insurance and Surety Corp (Trisco), through its board of directors, issued cash calls to its stockholders of record on their outstanding stock subscriptions amounting to P46,875,000. Aggregate partial payments of subscriptions as of June 1 following the cash calls has reached P30,000,000, thereby increasing the net worth of the company to P106,395,484.40 in compliance with the IC's Department Order. The company encourages its stockholders to fully pay the balances of their subscriptions before the end of the third quarter of this year.

Trisco was one of the 15 insurers named by the IC that have not reached the P100-million net worth mark, which information was carried as news items on several broadsheets several days ago.

Trisco, a 43-year-old company, has increased its authorized capital stock on March 13, 2006 from the original P50 million to P300 million. Subscribed capital stock on the increase (of P250 million) amounts to P62.5 million, P45.625 million of which is paid up. Present paid-up capital is P95.625 million.

Over the last four years, Trisco has expanded its market to 12 key cities in the Philippines: Makati, Kalookan (Camanava), San Fernando (Pampanga), San Pablo City, Legaspi City, Bacolod, Cagayan De Oro, Dagupan City, Ilo-ilo, Cebu, Davao, and General Santos.

Eton not involved in cases, firm says

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE REAL ESTATE FIRM OF TYCOON LUCIO C. Tan yesterday sought to ease potential buyers' concerns over its possible involvement in the government's sequestration cases against the Chinese-Filipino businessman.

In a briefing yesterday, officials of Eton Properties Philippines Inc. said that the firm—still officially known as Balabac Resources and Holdings Inc. —was "not involved in any litigation issues pending before judicial bodies relative [to] ownership issues with the government."

Eton president Danilo Ignacio said yesterday that the company had received several inquiries from clients about its potential involvement in the controversial cases, especially after Ilocos Rep. Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. agreed to help the government reclaim 60 percent of Tan's companies, which were allegedly illegally acquired.

"Neither is [Eton] one of the sequestered companies under the Lucio Tan Group being pursued by the PCGG (Presidential Commission on Good Government)," Ignacio said.

He added that these sequestration orders of the PCGG against Tan's firms had been lifted and declared null and void as early as February 2006 by the Sandiganbayan.

"In layman's terms, the said sequestration orders were rendered in violation of the ownership rights of the said Lucio Tan companies, which include Allied Banking Corp., among others," he said.

Ignacio said that the company had reassured potential buyers about their concerns and pointed out that sales have so far been unaffected by the developments.

The company made this statement as it formally unveiled plans for the development of Eton Baypark Manila on a property at the corner of Roxas Boulevard and T.M. Kalaw St. in Manila.

This move follows the strong take up of Eton's first residential project, The Eton Residences Greenbelt, which is now almost sold out after only two months on the market.

The company envisions Eton Baypark Manila to cater to Manila-based businessmen and entrepreneurs, especially those based in the nearby Binondo district.

The 25-story condominium offers buyers studio units at P2.5 million and three-bedroom units worth P8 million.

Ignacio said that 40 percent of the project's units being offered for sale have already been reserved by potential clients.

Eton is the first property development venture of the controversial Tan, who is also the country's richest man with an estimated net worth of $1.5 billion.

The company has several projects in the pipeline including the so-called Eton Mega City, which will rise on the 1,000-hectare Asia Brewery property in Santa Rosa, Laguna.

The firm has earmarked P10 billion for the development of seven priority projects over the next few years.

Moody's says RP finances better, but reforms needed

By Michelle V. Remo

RATINGS FIRM MOODY'S INvestor Service has recognized the government's improving financial position, but said more measures needed to be implemented for the Philippines to better compete with its neighbors.

Thomas Byrne, Moody's vice president and author of the ratings firm's annual report on the Philippines, acknowledged that more foreign direct investments were coming into the Philippines. But the amount of FDIs still paled in comparison with those entering other countries, he added.

"Overall weaknesses in the Philippines' investment climate are reflected in lagging fixed capital formation which, as a share of GDP, has declined to one of the lowest levels among emerging market economies," Moody's said in the summary of the report entitled "The Philippines: 2007 Credit Analysis."

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas earlier reported FDIs hit $710 million in the first quarter, up 18.5 percent from the $599 million recorded in the same period last year.

"Foreign direct investment in the country has picked up, but more progress in the privatization of the power sector would add to inflows and also catalyze investment in other sectors," Byrne added.

The Arroyo administration's economic managers attributed the increase in FDIs to factors like the reduced budget deficit of the government, slowdown in inflation and low interest rates.

Moody's agreed that the Philippines had made a substantial progress in its fiscal sector, but added that it has a long way to go to trim its debt burden to levels comparable with those of other emerging economies.

"Progress made in revenue reform and fiscal consolidation in 2006, and prospects for sustainable gains over the near term, support a stable ratings outlook," Byrne said.

"Debt management has lengthened the average tenor and helped to narrow spreads, but effective tax administration and prudent expenditure policies are needed for the long-run stability of the country's finances," he added.

The government's budget deficit was cut to only P64.8 billion last year from P146.8 billion in 2005. This year, the government targets to further trim the budget gap to only P63 billion and post a balanced budget by 2008.

Stocks shoot ...

From page B1

recorded on June 4 at 3,622.94.

The broader all-share index gained 43.08 points to 2,304.21.

Year-to-date, the stock market has gained 646.08 points or 21.66 percent.

Value turnover was P6.08 billion with a total of 6.099 billion shares changing hands. Gainers pounded losers 96 to 32.

"Local bulls were awakened by the overseas market," said Astro del Castillo, managing director at First Grade Holdings Inc. "Almost all markets were on a run. The market's all-time high validates our belief that prospects are indeed better. The bulls are trekking uncharted territory. We think the next level is 3,700."

Analysts earlier expressed concern that rising bond yields in the United States would trigger a possible rate hike by the US Federal Reserve, the equivalent of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"Lower bond yields in the US translate to lower borrowing costs for Philippine corporates that will expand profit margins and boost earnings growth, which is good for stock markets," said Paul Joseph Garcia, chief investment officer at ING Investment Management. "This is true for Philippine companies who have US debts."

Del Castillo said that, at home, investors are watching out for developments in the fiscal reforms front after disappointing first quarter figures.

"The only thing that will turn away the bulls is poor fiscal collection of government for another quarter," he said.

In the first quarter of the year, the Bureau of Internal Revenue collected only P143 billion in taxes, falling short of the P155-billion goal set by the government for the three-month period.

This resulted in a budget deficit of P52 billion, exceeding the projected ceiling of P45.8 billion.

Also, according to Moody's Investors Service, Philippine economic policy has yet to translate its initial successes in fiscal consolidation to improved underlying performance in the economy.

"Effective tax administration and prudent expenditure policies are needed for the ... stability of the country's finances," the ratings agency said.

In its annual report, Moody's said the "B1" foreign- and local-currency government bond ratings on the country reflect its relatively high sovereign debt burden, leaving government finances and external accounts vulnerable to shocks.

However, Moody's said progress in revenue reform and fiscal consolidation support a stable ratings outlook, and that the balance of payments is supported by a flexible exchange rate policy, stable export production base, sizable remittance inflows from overseas workers, and increasing foreign direct investment. *With a report from AFP*

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The State of Kuwait

The Ministry of Defense in the State of Kuwait is looking for:

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(1) Mechanical Engineer – Equipment and kitchens
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- Interested applicants must submit accredited copies of their academic training certificates.
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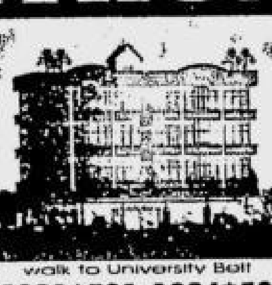

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(Basic Trainer Acquisition Project)

The project involves the acquisition of eighteen (18) Basic Trainer Aircraft and their Integrated Logistics Support (ILS) package. The plan is to acquire more Basic Trainer Aircraft to augment the existing fleet utilized by the Philippine Air Force.

1. The Department of National Defense (Armed Forces of the Philippines), through the General Appropriation Act and the AFP Modernization Program Act Trust Fund, intends to apply the sum of ***SIX HUNDRED TWENTY TWO MILLION FIVE HUNDRED NINETY THOUSAND PESOS (Php 622,590,000.00)*** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the ***Basic Trainer Aircraft Acquisition Project*** for the Armed Forces of the Philippines Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The DND/AFP now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Project with the following particulars:

NAME OF PROJECT	QTY	APPROVED BUDGET OF THE CONTRACT	COST OF BIDDING DOCUMENT
PAF Basic Trainer Acquisition Project	18	Php 622,590,000.00	Php 50,000.00

3. Delivery of GOODS is required within a period of **Three Hundred Twenty (320) days.** The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the bidding documents, ITB.
4. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws and regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibilty check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure
5. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from DND Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday excluding holidays.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of *FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS* (Php 50,000.00). The method of payment will be in cash only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
7. The DND Bids and Awards Committee will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **29 June 2007 at 9:00 A.M.** at the DND Conference Room, 3rd Floor, DND Bldg., Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.
8. Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted to the address below on or before **27 July 2007 at 9:00 A.M.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the forms and corresponding amount allowed under RA 9184 and its IRR-A. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
9. Bid opening shall be on **27 July 2007 at 9:00 A.M.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at DND Conference Room, 3rd Floor, DND Bldg., Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any of the forms and corresponding amount allowed under RA 9184 and its IRR-A.
10. Only bids from manufacturers or their duly authorized representatives of the aforementioned system/equipment will be entertained.
11. To facilitate eligibility checking, manufacturers and/or prospective bidders who wish to participate in the public bidding are required to apply for registration with the DND BAC, through the DND BAC Secretariat, at least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids for the procurement of the projects they wish to participate in, pursuant to DND BAC Cir 01-2005 dtd 12 May 2005 (A copy of the circular can be downloaded at the website specified below).
12. The DND/AFP reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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Telephone No: (632)911-6001 local 8414
Telefax No: (632)421-3531
Email: bacsecretariat@dnd.gov.ph
Website: www.afpmodernization.mil.ph

(Sgd.) **ASEC ROBERTO G NUQUI**
Chairman, DND BAC

(PDI - June 15, 2007)

Rice for food security

THE NATIONAL Food Authority has existed since 1972 as the country's guardian of food security, to ensure that Filipinos will have continuous access to good quality, affordable rice at all times.

Food security means food supply is stable without fluctuations or shortages from time to time. It means that quality food is available and affordable, especially to ordinary citizens, anywhere in the country.

Aside from food security, the agency is also mandated to stabilize rice supply and prices. This means the agency must maintain rice retail prices at reasonable levels for consumers as well as farm-gate prices that will enable farmers to derive reasonable returns from their investments.

Over the years, NFA's palay support price and rice selling price have served as benchmarks for the private sector, allowing the government to maintain a reasonable level of the commodity's supply and prices at all times.

These are the reasons why rice self-sufficiency is the more applicable policy for the Philippines because it is beneficial both for the farmers and the consumers.

A supply-led rice policy means the country would be more dependent on imports rather than domestic production. Unfortunately, more and more countries are beginning to realize that self-sufficiency, especially in staple foods, is still the more prudent choice because any government should not let the lifeblood of its people be dependent on the produce of other nations.

Changing the NFA's mandate, as a solution to its financial problems, requires legislation. In the last few years, there had been attempts to separate the agency's regulatory and proprietary functions via bills sponsored by various congressmen in the Lower House. These include House Bill 418 sponsored by Rep. Lacson; HB 1472 by Rep. Cua; HB 2098 by Rep. A. Espino Jr.; and HB 3803 by Rep. Figueroa.

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Exploration Corporation

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

June 13, 2007

BID BULLETIN NO. 1

We refer to the ongoing tender for the selection of Financial Advisor/Lead Arranger/ Underwriter/Global Coordinator to advise, guide and assist in the design, planning, preparation and implementation of the privatization of PNOC Exploration Corporation.

Recently, we have received requests from parties interested to participate in the bidding for the selection of Financial Advisor/Lead Arranger/Underwriter/Global Coordinator for the extension of the deadline for the submission of the authenticated copies of the Legal Documents cited in the Checklist of Eligibility Documents owing to the lead time required for the completion of the authentication of said documents.

In view thereof, we hereby advise and inform all concerned that we will accept copies of the Legal Documents that are not authenticated, as well as all Technical, Financial and other documents enumerated in the Checklist of Eligibility Documents, on or before 19 June 2007 subject, however, to the submission of the authenticated copies of the Legal Documents on or before June 22. Failure to submit the authenticated copies of the Legal Documents on or before said deadline shall mean disqualification from participation in the bidding.

For information and guidance.

EDGARDO M. DEL FONSO
Chairman, PNOC EC Privacom

(PDI–June 15, 2007)

smi

SAGITTARIUS MINES, INC.
A Mineral Development Partnership Caring for People and Nature

Sagittarius Mines, Inc., a mining firm based in Tampakan, South Cotabato, is intensifying its community engagement initiatives for the host communities and would like to receive expressions of interest from organizations that are willing to assist and/ or work with the company in the following areas:

1. Capacity-building initiatives for local communities
2. Community development initiatives
3. Elaboration of community development plans
4. SWOT analysis with local communities
5. Participatory planning for local communities
6. Social capital
7. Social Research
8. Social Impact Assessment
9. Enhancement of local organizations, institutional strengthening
10. Expertise in agriculture systems and community economics

Interested organizations are required to send their profile indicating their areas of expertise, services and experiences on or before June 22, 2007 to:

MR. RAUL A. FARFAN
Manager for Community and Local Affairs
Sagittarius Mines, Inc.
JPM Sports Complex, Bula-Lagao Road, General Santos City

Or

MS. BELLA D. LECHONSITO
Superintendent for Community Relations and Development
Sagittarius Mines, Inc.
JPM Sports Complex, Bula-Lagao Road, General Santos City

You may also email your profile at rfarfan@xstratacopper.com.pe or bella.lechonsito@smi.com.ph.

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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Philippine Sugar Center Bldg., North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (02) 454-0254
Website: www.nfa.gov.ph

RE-INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF AGUSTA HELICOPTER

The National Food Authority Central Office invites all interested parties to bid for one (1) unit Agusta Helicopter, description of which is as follows:

Brand	Construzioni Aeronautiche Giovanni Agusta
Model Number	Agusta 109A
Serial No.	7184
Year Manufactured	1980
Registration No.	RP-609
Specifications	8-seater, twin turbine engine 840 Shp., Allison Model 250-C20B, Engine Nos. CAE-832080(1) and CAE-832146(2), 4-blade main rotor propeller and see-saw type tail rotor blade with Standard Avionics and GPS Garmin 155. Total flying time is 2,753.54 hours. With expired Certificate of Airworthiness due for Annual Inspection, to comply with all mandatory service bulletins and Commercial Engine Bulletin for Engine No. 2. With Certificate of Registraton valid until September 2, 2007.
Minimum Bid Price	Fourteen Million Pesos (P14,000,000.00)

Bid proposals shall be on "as-is-where-is" basis. Offerors shall be required to post a bid security equivalent to one percent (1%) of the total amount based on his/her bid offer. It shall either be in the form of cash, manager's check or cashier's check payable to NFA.

Bid documents, such as tender form, including terms and conditions shall be issued only to interested bidders upon payment of a non-refundable/non-transferable fee of P20,000.00 not later than 2:00 p.m. on July 2, 2007. For further details, you may contact the BAC Secretariat at telephone number 455-2758.

Activities relative to this bidding shall be held at the NFA Boardroom, 6th Floor, Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

Pre-Bid Conference	- July 2, 2007, 2:00 PM
Receipt and Opening of Bids	- June 13, 2007
Submission of Bid	- 1:00 PM to 1:45 PM
Opening of Bids	- 2:00 PM

NFA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive any defects or informalities found therein and accept only such bids which in its judgment are most reasonable and advantageous to NFA. The decision of the Committee as confirmed by the BAC Chairman shall be deemed final.

(Sgd.) **PEDRO S. HERNANDO, JR.**
Deputy Administrator & BAC Chairperson

(PDI - June 15, 2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project / Brief Description	One (1) lot supply and delivery of Spun Aluminum Roof Centrifugal Exhaust Fan per BSP specifications
Approved Budget for the Contract	P 2,000,000.00
Delivery Period	Within ten (10) weeks after receipt of approved contract

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar project within the last five (5) years (Y2002 to present) with an amount of at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC). The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/ fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Starting 15 June 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	29 June 2007; 11:00 AM
3. Opening of Bids	17 July 2007; 2:00 PM
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003.
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **P1,000.00** to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI–June 15, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Region IV-MIMAROPA
DIVISION OF CALAPAN CITY
Old City Hall Bldg., A. Bonifacio St., Ibaba East, City of Calapan
Telefax No. (043) 288-1581
E-mail Address: deped_calapancity@yahoo.com

DepED

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education, Division of Calapan City through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all prospective bidders to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for:

NAME OF PROJECT	: **Supply and Delivery of Elementary Tables and Chairs, Elementary & Secondary Armchairs and Teachers Tables and Chairs**
ABC & FUNDING SOURCE	: **Funding Source is the Government of the Philippines CY 2006 GAA (75% Allocation of the DepEd Desk/Armchair Project)**
CONTRACT DURATION	: **One Hundred Twenty (120) Calendar Days**
DELIVERY SITES	: **"Door-to-door" delivery to various recipient schools (See Schedule of requirements of the Bidding Documents)**

LOT	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	ABC (Php)
A	Elementary Tables and Chairs (All wood)	890	1,780,000.00
	Teachers Tables and Chairs (All wood)	16	73,600.00
B	Secondary Armchairs (All wood)	700	546,000.00
	Teachers Tables and Chairs (All wood)	14	64,400.00

The schedule of the BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Date and Time	Venue
1. Availability of Bidding Documents	June 20-27, 2007	Division Office
2. Pre-bid Conference	July 4, 2007, 9:00 A.M.	Adriatico Mem. School H.E. Building
3. Receipt and Opening of Bids	July 22, 2007, 10:00 A.M.	Adriatico Mem. School H.E. Building

The Bidding Documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat Office, DepED Division of Calapan City starting on June 20, 2007 to June 27, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable amount of Philippine Pesos **Two Thousand (Php 2,000.00).**

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with procedures under the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information is also available at http//www.deped.gov.ph or www.procurementservice.gov.ph or call DepED-Division of Calapan City at Telephone Number **(043) 288-1581.**

The Department of Education reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **TERESITA S. BACUDO**
OIC-Asst. Schools Div. Superintendent
BAC Chairperson

(PDI–June 15, 2007)

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Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION
Makati City

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,
Petitioner,

-vesus-

SSC Case No. 12-16248-05

MONTESSORI DE SAN LORENZO SCHOOL, INC., represented by ROSARIO G. ACIERTO, ANITA G. AUSTRIA, MACARIO M. AUSTRIA, FARAH G. ACIERTO and ELVIRA B. ALONZO, in their capacities as trustees,
Respondent.

x----------x

SUMMONS

TO : MS. FARAH G. ACIERTO

GREETINGS:

You are hereby required to file within fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this Summons with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission, 12th Floor, SSS (Makati) Building, 6782 Ayala Avenue corner Rufino (formerly Herrera) Street, Makati City, your Answer to the Petition filed by petitioner SSS for collection of unpaid contributions and the corresponding penalties thereof against Montessori de San Lorenzo School.

You are further required to **serve a copy of your Answer upon the petitioner** through counsel, Atty. June R. Evangelista-Estabillo of SSS Biñan Branch Office at Chua Bldg., National Highway, San Antonio, Biñan, Laguna.

If you fail to answer within the time prescribed above, the Hearing Commissioner, may upon motion of the petitioner or *motu-proprio*, declare you in default and shall forthwith proceed to receive the petitioner's evidence *ex-parte* and thereafter recommend to the Commission either the granting or denial of the petition as the evidence may warrant.

SO ORDERED.

Makati City, Philippines, May 16, 2007.

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

(PDI - June 15, 2007)

PSALM
Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation ("*PSALM*") Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee ("*Committee*") invites interested parties to participate in and bid for the privatization of the following:

600 MW Batangas Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant located at Calaca, Batangas

(the "*Asset*"). The Asset is being privatized on an "*as is where is*" basis.

Interested parties must submit a Letter of Interest ("LOI") to the PSALM Privatization Bids and Awards Committee (the "Committee") which shall state the full name, address, telephone and fax numbers of the interested party, name of the principal contact, and signed by an authorized representative. All LOIs must be received by the Committee at the PSALM Office with address at 4th Floor Bankmer Building, 6756 Ayala Avenue, Makati City not later than 5:00 p.m. on 29 June 2007, (the "LOI Submission Deadline"). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 78 of RA 9136, both in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of Two Thousand U.S. Dollars (U.S.$2,000.00) (the "Participation Fee"). The Participation Fee shall either be in cash, manager's check or cashier's check. All bank charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The Confidentiality Agreement, Undertaking, and Participation Fee must be received by the Committee on or before 5:00 p.m. on 4 July 2007 to entitle an interested party any further participation in the privatization of the Asset.

The Bidding Package, which includes the bidding procedures, shall be issued during office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from 18 June 2007 until 5 July 2007 at 5:00 p.m. (the *"Deadline"*) at the PSALM Office. In accordance with the bidding procedures, only interested parties who have been issued the Bidding Package by the Deadline or a consortium which includes an interested party will be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

Due Diligence	: 18 June 2007 to 12 October 2007
Pre-bid Conference	: 18 July 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the PSALM Office
Deadline for Receipt of Bids by PSALM	: 16 October 2007, 12:00 noon at the PSALM Office

References to dates and times shall be based on Manila time. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the immediately succeeding business day in Makati City.

A two-envelope bidding system will be adopted. Interested parties will be required to post a bid security equivalent to nine million U. S. Dollars (U.S.$ 9,000,000.00) in the form of an irrevocable standby letter of credit which must be acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the winning bidder shall be substituted by a performance security to guaranty prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction. The details of the privatization of the Asset are contained in the Bidding Package.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 4th Floor Bankmer Building, 6756 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Inquiries and clarifications shall be addressed to Mr. Froilan A. Tampinco at the PSALM Office or at telefax number (632) 892-6029 or e-mail address fatampinco@psalm.gov.ph.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or proposals or bids therefrom, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify parties for any expense or loss that they may incur as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, or change the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and the venue provided herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements, or changes.

(Sgd.) RAPHAEL P. M. LOTILLA
Chairman
PSALM Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI- June 13, 14 & 15, 2007)

DOLE to create maritime office

TO SPEED UP ASSISTANCE TO THE MARITIME industry particularly in addressing the concerns for Filipino seafarers, Labor and Employment Secretary Arturo D. Brion is set to create a maritime office under his direct supervision.

Brion said that the Maritime Office will be manned by a full time maritime officer, LCDR Eustacio Nimrod Enriquez who is currently serving as Deputy Executive Director of the National Maritime Polytechnic (NMP) in Tacloban.

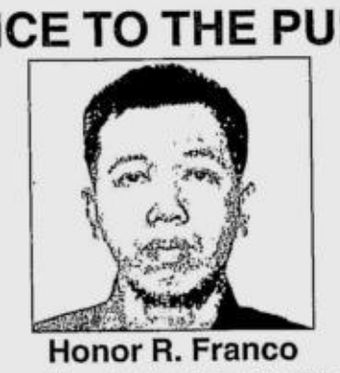
Earlier, the labor chief met with stakeholders in the maritime industry to formulate a joint action on how to approach common concerns in the industry.

Brion said the Maritime Office will be at the frontline in carrying out collaborative efforts of DOLE and its partners in the maritime industry.

He said that Enriquez will soon transfer to the DOLE in Intramuros, Manila for full time work as his assistant on maritime affairs.

The creation of the Maritime Office is essential in view of the developments in the maritime sector, Brion said adding that Enriquez will assist him particularly in taking advantage of those developments that would be beneficial to Filipino seafarers.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



Honor R. Franco

Whose last known address is Blk. 48 Lot 20, Villa Palao, Calamba, Laguna is the subject of an "Order of Arrest Warrant" issued by Branch 39, Metropolitan Trial Court of Quezon City.

Moreover, Branch 60, Metropolitan Trial Court of Mandaluyong City has issued a "Writ of Replevin" for the recovery of a motor vehicle from **HONOR R. FRANCO** more particularly described as follows:

Make/Model	:	Honda City
Motor no.	:	P3RD1-P302924
Chassis no.		PAD3A1530XV102967
Plate no.	:	WPS-638
Cert. of Registration	:	4004393-1

The above described motor vehicle is now in the watchlist for apprehension by the Traffic Management Group (TMG) Philippine National Police.

For any information, please contact Mr. Bong Avilla, Tel. 533-2388 or 0920-9089472.

(PDI–June 15, 2007)

POEA 24-HR HOTLINES **722-1144 • 722-1155**

For your Classified and Obituary Ads, please call **637-2008**

OBITUARIES

PHILIPPINE CENTRE FOR ST. PIO OF PIETRELCINA, INC. to hold a Eucharistic celebration to commemorate the canonization of ST. PIO

Padre Pio, proclaimed saint by Pope John Paul II on June 16, 2002, was known for his gifts of healing, prophecy, discernment, among others. He was born of simple, hardworking farming parents on May 25, 1887, in Pietrelcina, Southern Italy. He was tutored privately until his entry into the Capuchin friars at age of 15. Of feeble health but strong will, with the help of grace, he completed the required studies and was ordained priest in 1910.

On Sept. 20, 1918, at age 31, the five wounds of our Lord's Passion appeared on his body making him the first stigmatized priest in the history of the Church. Countless numbers were attracted to his confessional and many more received his saintly and spiritual guidance through correspondence. His whole life was marked by long hours of prayer and continued austerity. His letters to his spiritual directors reveal the ineffable sufferings, physical and spiritual, which accompanied him all through his life. They also reveal his very deep union with God, his burning love for the Blessed Eucharist and our Blessed Mother. Worn out by over half a century of immense suffering and constant apostolic activity in San Giovanni, Rotondo, he was called to his heavenly reward on 23 Sept. 1968.

To commemorate the 5th anniversary of the canonization of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, the Philippine Centre for St. Pio of Pietrelcina, Inc., a non-stock, non-profit organization engaged in propagating the teachings of St. Pio, will hold a Eucharistic celebration on June 16, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. and at 5:00 P.M. at the St. Pio Chapel, 188 E. Rodriguez, Jr. Avenue (C5), Bagumbayan, Quezon City. Everyone is invited to attend. For more inquiries, please contact Telefax 634-3669, admin@saintpiocenter.com, www.saintpiocenter.com.

St. Pio of Pietrelcina

In Loving Memory

On The 1st Death Anniversary of

DR. LEONORA (Nora) LOYOLA ORIONDO

who peacefully joined her Creator on June 15, 2006.

Holy Masses will be held at the following churches:

Santisima Trinidad Parish	*7:30 A.M.*
St. Anthony Parish	*7:30 A.M.*
Nuestra Sra. De Guia Parish	*7:30 A.M.*
St. Vincent De Paul Parish	*8:00 A.M.*
St. Francis Xavier Parish Nasugbu, Batangas	*8:00 A.M.*
Immaculate Conception Parish Balayan, Batangas	*6:30 A.M.*

Her brothers, sister, sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces and relatives wish to thank everyone who extended sympathies and condolences and offered prayers for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Notify family and friends of a loved one who had just passed away.

We accept death notices, announcing details of the person's wake and interment. For a very affordable fee you can reach out to everyone who have been a part of the life of your dearly departed. For more information, you may contact Inquirer Classifieds at (02) 897 8425.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

AGATONA AQUINO-REYES

wish to convey our deepest appreciation to all of you, our relatives and friends who spent precious time with us, sent flowers, mass cards, gave donations or in some other way expressed your love, concern and support in celebration of Agatona's coming home to her Creator.

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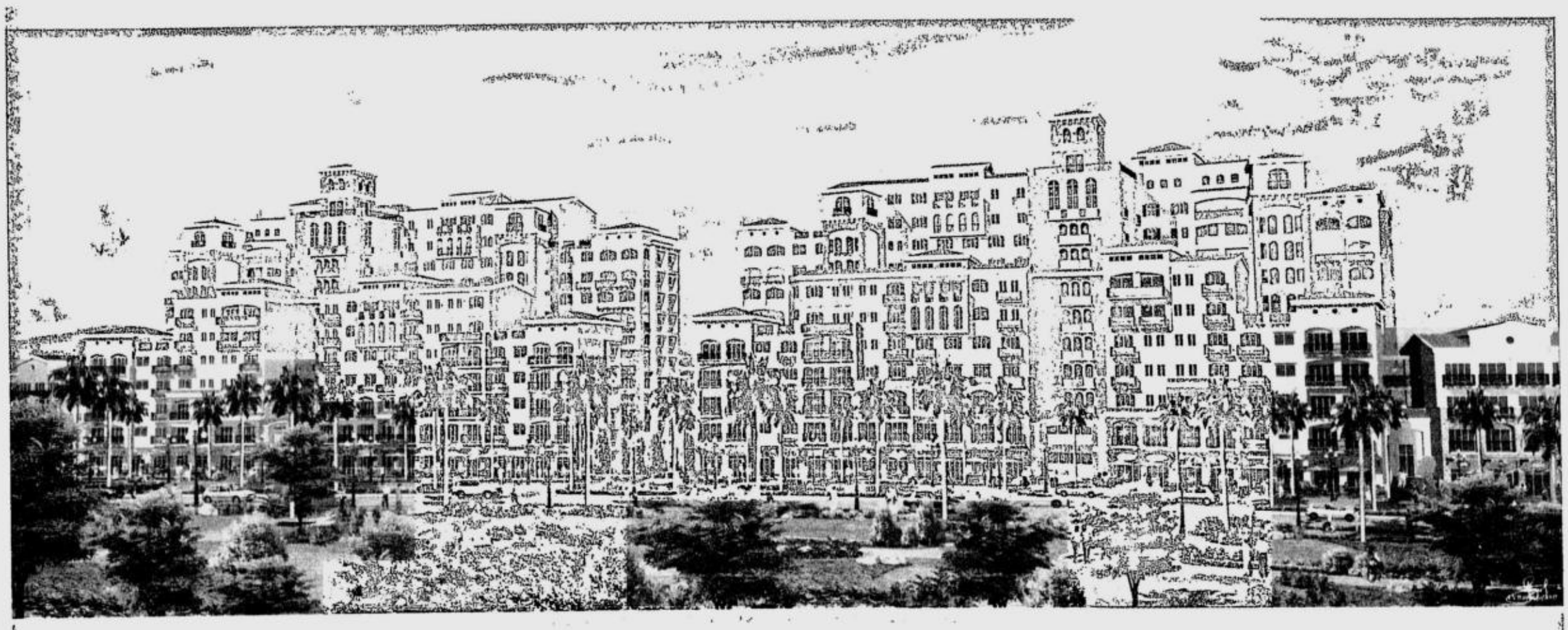
Cubao:	**Kalaw:**
912-9008 to 11 (Aurora)	528-0213; 527-3342
	Megamall:
	635-0219; 635-0220

ERRATUM
In the obituary of
Paquito Santos De Guzman
that appeared on June 14, 2007, interment date should be June 17, 2007 instead of June 16, 2007 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..."
Psalm 23:4

More Classifieds
Department of Labor – NCR
Page B4



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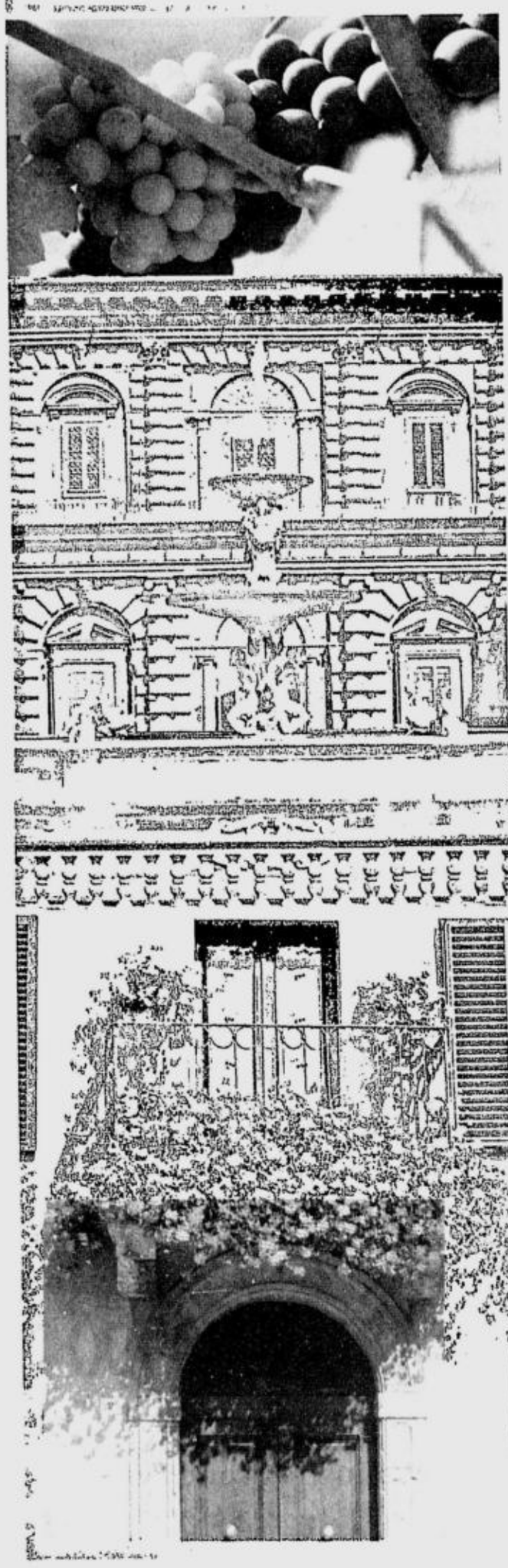
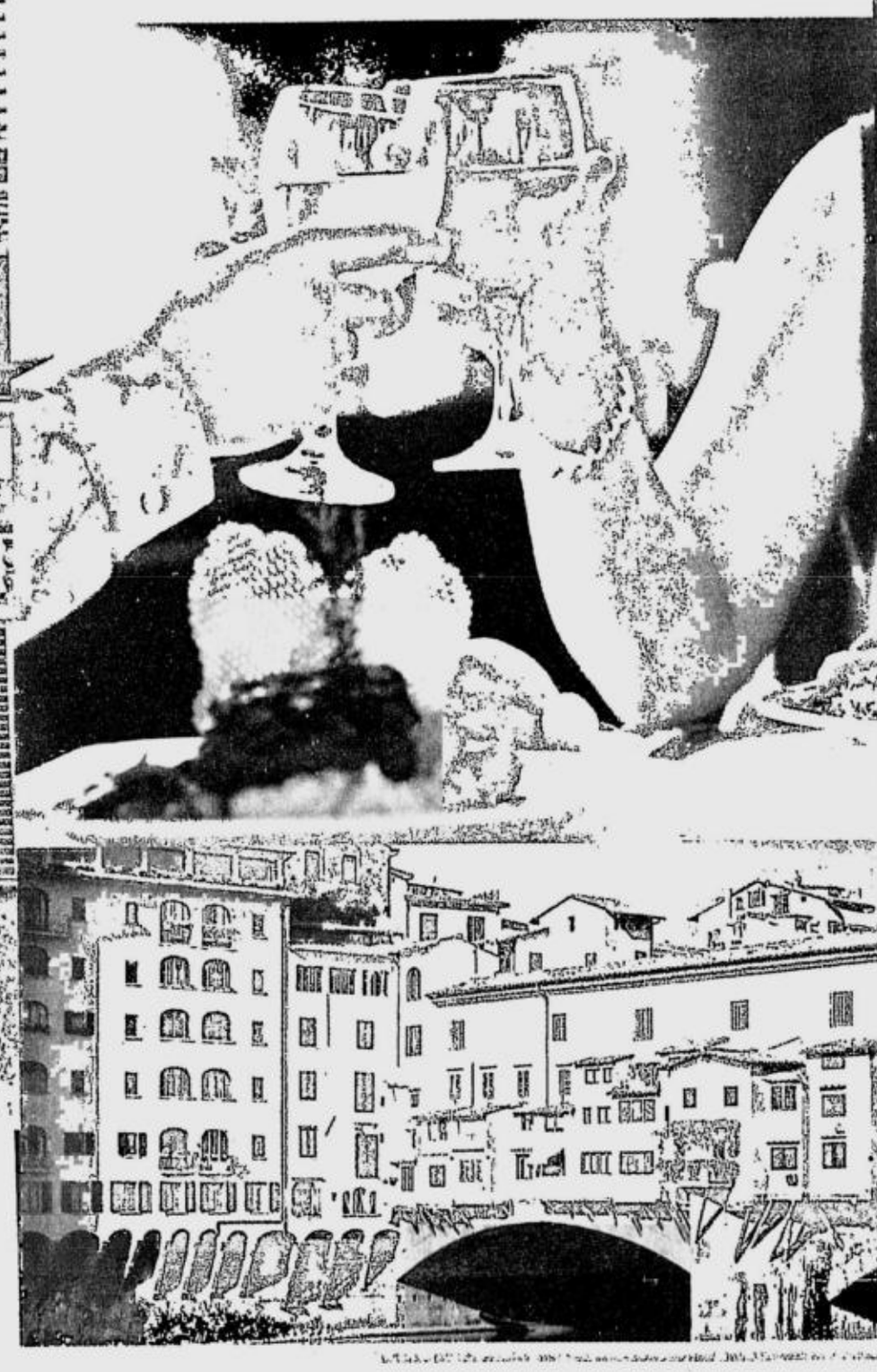
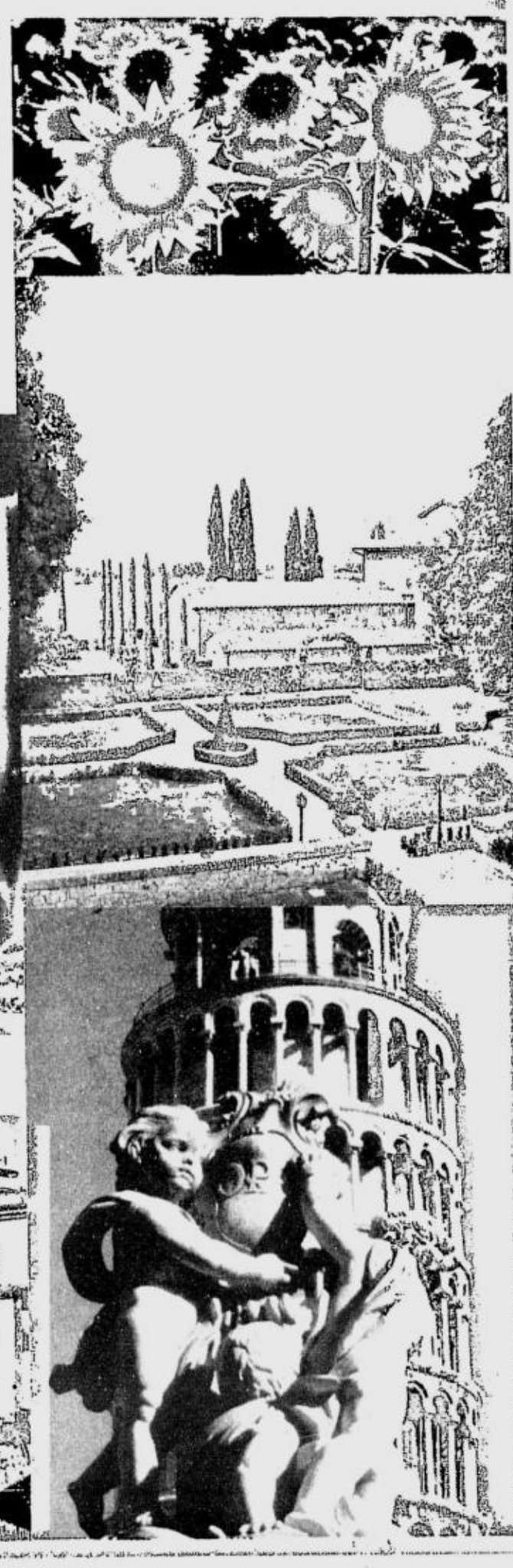
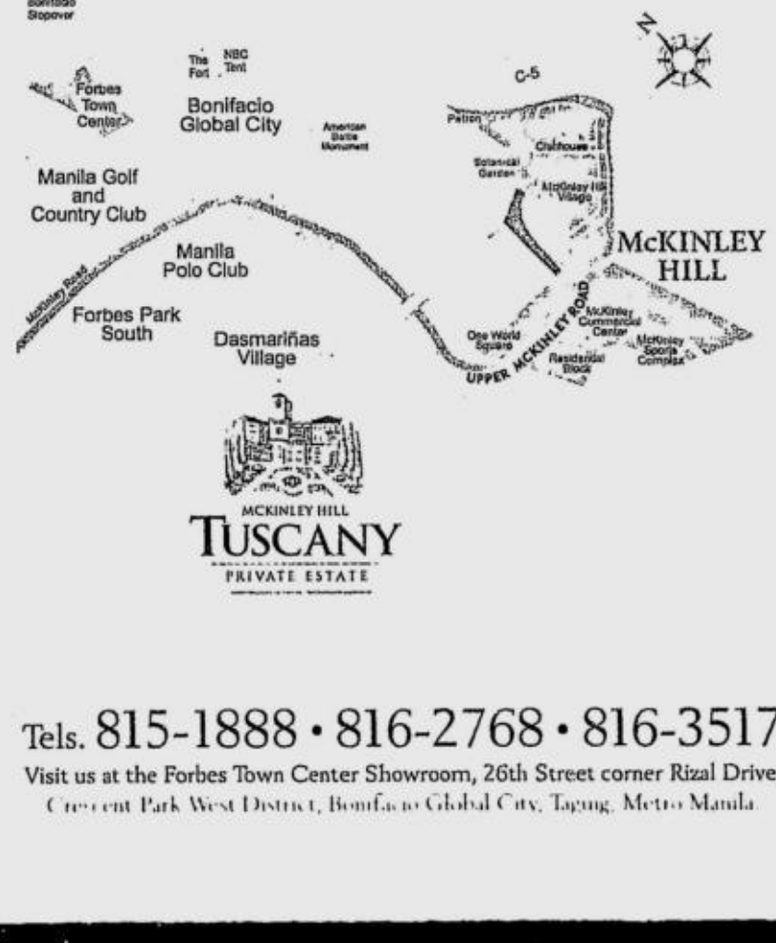


MCKINLEY HILL
TUSCANY
PRIVATE ESTATE
Near Forbes Park







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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Worker loses job, finds creative pursuit

INNOVATIONS at La Herminia includes an electric bobbin winder that mechanizes the spooling process

Text and photos by Hazel P. Villa
Inquirer Visayas

Learns initial ropes from mother, grows the venture

KALIBO, AKLAN—WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR a businessman to survive the growing up pains of a provincial enterprise, characterized by persistent demands for improved products, and a finicky market?

Patience, perseverance, hard work, creativity, enthusiasm for innovations, and a never-say-die attitude—if you ask Allan Tumbokon, the 44-year-old owner of Aklan's top loom-weaving company specializing in piña cloth.

He does not say outright that he has those values, but the story of La Herminia Piña Weaving Industry in Kalibo that started in early 1996 with a start-up capital of P150,000 is testimony to Tumbokon's ability to weather the problems of a typical provincial SME (small and medium enterprise).

Laid off from his work at the local Department of Public Works and Highways, Tumbokon channeled his initial disappointment

WORKER/ B2-2

Actual shot of Mayfield Park Residences.

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The Manors at Celebrity Place
Mayfield Park Residences
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Subdivisions
Villa Alegre Homes
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Mahogany Place

Residential Leisure
Alta Vista de Boracay

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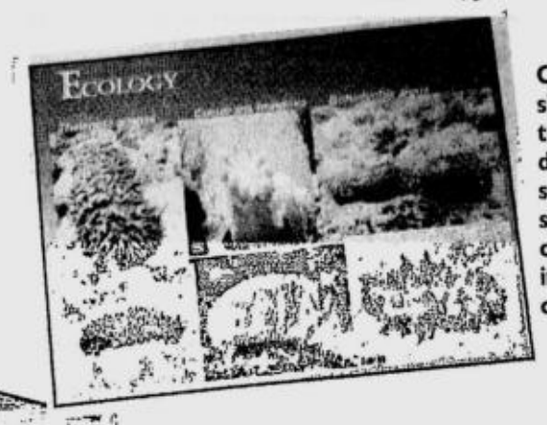
Sea cucumber industry gets needed attention



CHARTS showing the different species of sea cucumber in the country

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—THE SEA CUCUMBER INdustry in the country, which is already threatened by over exploitation, finally got the attention it deserved from fishery authorities during a two-day national forum here last week.

The country is the second largest exporter of processed cucumber meat, next to Indonesia, according to Westly Rosario, interim executive director of the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI) and chief of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources research center here.

Rosario says there is a continuous "high demand" for sea cucumber products in the world market because of the recent discovery of medical, pharmaceutical and other commercial applications.

However, there are no research and development, no policies on exports and no laws on fishery and trade management for the commodity, he says.

The country has been exporting sea cucumbers since the 18th century and processed cucumber meat ranks eighth among the Philippines' major fishery exports.

Dr. Marie Antonette Juinio-Meñez, professor of the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute, says while there are no data to show that sea cucumbers are overexploited due to international trade of processed meat, there is a general perception that it is on the verge of collapse based on "anecdotal reports of collection sizes getting smaller and sites getting deeper."

Juinio-Meñez says the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is expected to include two species of the sea cucumber (*Holothuriidae* and *Stichopodidae*) on its list by October 2008.

This means that the country should limit or regulate the export of sea cucumbers from the wild, their parts or derivatives and should impose regulatory measures on annual quota and sizes for exports.

Rosario says the NFRDI is establishing a hatchery for sea cucumbers at the BFAR research center here. Personnel assigned to the hatchery would be trained by scientists working on the commodity in Australia and New Caledonia.

"We are confident in terms of technology because our partners are international scientists," he says.

The larvae that will be produced will be used for restocking testing centers to be put up at marine research areas at the Hundred Islands National Park in Alaminos City and Bolinao town, both in Pangasinan, and in Mindanao.

WESTLY Rosario of the National Fisheries Research Development Institute, shows a poster featuring different species of sea cucumber in the country.
RAY B. ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

People's organizations involved in marine protection will also be trained on sea ranching, Rosario says.

"We have to make sure that the wild is sustained and managed," Juinio-Meñez says.

There are about 100 known species of sea cucumber in the country but only 30 are harvested commercially.

Dr. Ruth Gamboa, a professor of UP Mindanao, says sea cucumbers thrive both on sea grass floor and reef areas.

They are "earthworms" of the sea, burrowing deep into the sand, loosening up the top layer of sea floor so other organisms can have oxygen, Gamboa says.

But siltation of sea grass beds and reefs means loss of habitats for sea cucumbers, further endangering their existence and "reproductive cues."

Reproductive cues are signals for the sea cucumbers to reproduce, Juinio-Meñez says.

Sea cucumbers are exported mostly to China, where they are in demand as a delicacy.

"With the affluence of China, [the Chinese] are indiscriminate and will buy anything," Juinio-Meñez says.

Sea cucumbers are considered aphrodisiac and as cure for arthritis, wounds and high blood pressure.

A pharmaceutical company in the United States has also developed sea cucumbers as base for nutritional formulas for humans and pets.

A study by Glorina Pocsidio, which the Department of Science and Technology awarded in 1986, found that sea cucumbers have properties that prevent tumor and cancer.

Gamboa says sea cucumbers have no taste but have high-protein content.

Processed cucumber meat can be found in supermarkets with the names "bat," "balat," or "trepang." Dried meat for export varies in prices, from P200 to P3,000 a kilogram, depending on the species.

Worker loses job ...

From page B2-1

to the creative pursuit of loom weaving with his mother, Herminia's, help.

"It's at the start of the business where all the problems are. I don't know anything about business and I had no materials," says Tumbokon, who with his wife Nelda, later became adept at weaving after getting pointers from Herminia.

Eleven years after and a wealth of priceless experience, La Herminia has 130 regular employees, with some 120 added to the workforce depending on the volume of orders from fashion designers and textile producers here and abroad.

At the start of the business, the engineering graduate of Adamson University knew that he had to find a way to make the production of the delicate and airy fabric (from the pineapple plant Ananas comosus (Linn) merr) faster to meet deadlines imposed by buyers. By then, Tumbokon had started a working relationship with Aklan's Department of Trade and Industry that sent him on a study mission to Canada from June 9 to July 3, 2000 to pick pointers from the different weaving equipment of the Le Centre des Textiles Contemporains de Montreal.

When he got home, Tumbokon fabricated an electric bobbin winder that enabled La Herminia to mechanize the spooling process. Tumbokon, with a local craftsman, also came up with semi-mechanized looms with flying shuttles that can be operated by a single person instead of two.

This new technique made it possible for La Herminia to weave various fabrics as wide as 120 inches and the confidence to finally participate in the Manila Fashion Accessories Manufacturers and Exporters (FAME) International Trade Fair in October 2002. The company's participation, in turn, opened it to the possibilities of exporting its products.

It was at the Manila FAME that La Herminia became known for its spun silk shawl, piña seda cloths (piña woven with silk) and fabrics made of various fiber blends, which according to the DTI, are still the favorites of both local and international fashion designers.

PATIENCE, perseverance, hard work, creativity, enthusiasm for innovations, and never-say-die attitude are key to success for Tumbokon

Tumbokon acknowledges the DTI and the provincial leadership of Aklan for giving him the good breaks, by sending him not only to management seminars, but also training him in firm-level consultancy.

He now has three weaving centers in Aklan, each with a specialization. The Tangalan Center specializes in producing 60-width cloth, the Balete Center in weaving "renggue" or traditional cloth, and the Kalibo Center focuses on barong products and engages in product development. In April 2004, La Herminia was adjudged "Best Product Design" at the Manila FAME International Katha Award Fashion Complement and in the same year, the Unesco, through the Asian Handicraft Promotion and Development Association, gave La Herminia the "Seal of Excellence Award."

"It is difficult to train people. Weaving needs patience and passion. Sometimes, in their drive to earn, the quality of their work is sacrificed," says Tumbokon, who also trained under the Philippine Textile Research Institute.

A worker who weaves for eight hours on a cloth with a design can finish three-fourths to a half meter whereas one meter of "plain weave" can be done in a day.

Those working on plain weave are paid P3,000 a month while those weaving cloth with designs are paid P5,000 to P9,000 a month, depending on the intricacy of the design.

"I learned one important thing—that a person who used to have nothing has improved his life because of this loom-weaving industry," says Tumbokon, seemingly speaking for himself.

The DTI's records show that 41 La Herminia weavers are Social Security System and Philhealth members. On the other hand, 15 weavers enjoyed improved lifestyles: some renovated their nipa and bamboo houses into concrete while others bought motorcycles and appliances—all thanks to being employed at La Herminia.

There is currently a new passion a-brewing at La Herminia's three centers as workers strive to fill orders from Manila, Laguna, Cebu, the United States, Japan, France, and Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, workers at Tumbokon's 1,000-square-meter lot, which he bought with company profits, in Balete town, are busy raising Tagum and Talisay trees that will provide the natural dyes for piña seda cloths, shawls, cushion covers and barongs.

There's no stopping this businessman from trying out new things and we can only look forward to the ways he would be developing the piña fabric and putting this unique Philippine lifestyle product in the international limelight.

AKLAN businessman Allan Tumbokon with wife Nelda show loom-woven products that fashion designers here and abroad seek.

Betting on healing powers of VCO

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

MAY VELILLA IS A BELIEVER IN THE healing and cosmetic properties of virgin coconut oil.

This is why the 36-year-old entrepreneur is betting her time and money into a business that will showcase cosmetics products made of virgin coconut oil to the export market.

Nutramedica was actually put up in 2004 to manufacture, market and distribute so-called nutraceuticals or dietary supplements supposed to make a person more healthy, such as the Nutrafit and Exofat Forte.

In the course of her research, she discovered and soon became a disciple spreading the gospel of virgin coconut oil.

"I read so much about it, all those good benefits from virgin coconut oil.

And I thought it was a good business opportunity because we have a lot of virgin coconut oil here," Velilla says.

Velilla soon became one of the first to market virgin coconut oil for internal use in 2004.

The claim was that a person can maintain good health and cure a host of ailments, even heart disease, by taking at least a tablespoon of virgin coconut oil a day.

She posted good sales, but then she decided to get out of it after two years when she noticed that the market was getting crowded and profit margins were getting squeezed.

Not ready to give up virgin coconut oil altogether, she scouted for a new business around it and she found it in skin care.

Velilla says that virgin coconut oil is not only good at keeping the internal organs in top condition, it also helps a person put his or her best face and body forward.

Tapping the expertise of chemists and researchers, Nutramedica developed a line of skin care products made of virgin coconut oil, now being marketed under the brand name CocoZen.

"We used all natural products in the development and we used as much of the local products as we could, such as the rose and the citrus scents, and of course, the virgin coconut oil," Velilla says.

Her first products were the rose and citrus-scented massage oils and body lotion with no hint of the signature sweet smell of coconut oil.

For CocoZen to fight its way into the highly competitive skin care market, Velilla says she concentrated on the drugstores like Watson's and Mercury.

"I had to be selective because it is very expensive to go into the supermarkets," Velilla says.

The drugstore industry is also a sector that Velilla knows well having started off as a medical representative for Glaxo after graduating from college in 1992.

She says it was in fact the doctors that she dealt with in her close to three-year career as a medical representative who encouraged her to go into business.

"They told me I should put up my own company. They said, why work for somebody else when you can put up your own," Velilla says.

They knew that being an entrepreneur will not be hard for Velilla since her parents were into business, particularly hog and poultry raising in Velilla's home province of Isabela.

Velilla fortunately heeded her friends' advice and with capital borrowed from her parents, she went into the distribution of pharmaceutical products in the Cagayan Valley.

VELILLA

But after three and a half years, she became restless.

"I realized that I would not be able to grow if I will stay based in the province, so I thought of putting up a company in Manila," she says.

The company became Biolink Pharma, which was put up in 1998 to import products from Korea and became a toll manufacturer for medicines, such as analgesics and injectibles.

"I did not have any medical representatives, I distributed through other companies," she says.

But again, while Biolink flourished, she was not content. She wanted to do more.

"I guess what I really wanted was to have a product that is really mine. I have always wanted to develop a homegrown product that can be exported with raw materials sourced here," Velilla says.

That product is CocoZen, which she says she is about to export to the United States, Singapore and Japan.

"I believe in its potential for growth and it is a good business to be in because we are in a position to help coconut farmers who supply us with the raw materials," she says.

In an attempt to boost sales, Velilla tapped INQUIRER columnist and health buff Cory Quirino as an endorser and partner in developing a product line called the Forever Young line.

"It took us about six months to develop the Forever Young kit, which is primarily a five-in-one kit that will take care of the body from head to toe.

Velilla says the rose line appeals more to the older women, while the citrus line is favored by the younger set, especially those who are into sports and rely on the citrus scent for a quick energy boost.

She says she is investing in traditional advertising in both broadcast in print to increase awareness of her product as well as below-the-line marketing activities, such as participation in events and trade shows.

During the 2005 trade show of Citem, for instance, CocoZen's massage oil was awarded "Best Product" during the natural products fair.

Velilla is just starting to fully explore the opportunities in the virgin coconut-oil based products and she believes that there is a huge market overseas.

This she attributes to the growing awareness of the benefits of natural products, such as virgin coconut oil.

To take advantage of the growing demand, Nutramedica is currently formulating more products, such as body scrubs, body butter and lip balm, and adding more scents to come up with a full line of CocoZen products that will take on not just the Philippines, but the rest of the world.

Medical tourism: A booming industry

By Fritz-Erich J. Baldoria and Jose A. Osana
SGV & Co

TAX-FILES

SOME PEOPLE MAY HAVE ARGUMENTS against an interdependent world economy. Nevertheless, this phenomenon has revealed the Filipino's competitive edge in the international market—our service industry. This industry is expanding all around with the emergence of all kinds of outsourcing companies. Indeed, the Philippines is becoming a haven of a technical services sector.

One lucrative opportunity currently being developed is medical tourism. Medical tourism is the travel of foreign patients to the Philippines to avail of quality but affordable healthcare services, for treatment of illnesses and health problems. Just like in the outsourcing businesses, medical tourism particularly has great potential because of the skills of our medical practitioners. They possess advanced knowledge that meets international standards. They are fluent in English which allows them to communicate easily with foreign patients. Moreover, Filipinos have a distinct brand of care, competence and sensitivity that patients find quite appealing. Of course, domestic health providers have lower maintenance costs and practitioners have lower professional fees compared to their foreign counterparts.

The concept of medical tourism should not be something new to Filipinos. It has been reported that, as early as the 70s, faith healers were already offering package tours to foreigners who were seeking treatment using alternative means. Some healers even had their own inns so that accommodations were already part of the package. This business is not surprising since the Philippines is considered as the mecca and epicenter of faith healers. Nevertheless, this declined after several years.

At present, the government is continually crafting measures to provide special incentives for this emerging industry. The Bureau of Investments ("BOI") has included medical tourism as part of the Investment Priorities Plan ("IPP") since 2004. A Philippine Medical Tourism Program has been established, pursuant to Executive Order No. 372, to attract foreign clients to the Philippines for medical care and health wellness. The first ever Philippine Medical Congress was launched towards the end of last year. In Congress, House Bill No. 5696, which provides further fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to investors, is pending approval. At present, fiscal and non-fiscal incentives are available if the enterprise is registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority ("PEZA") or with the BOI.

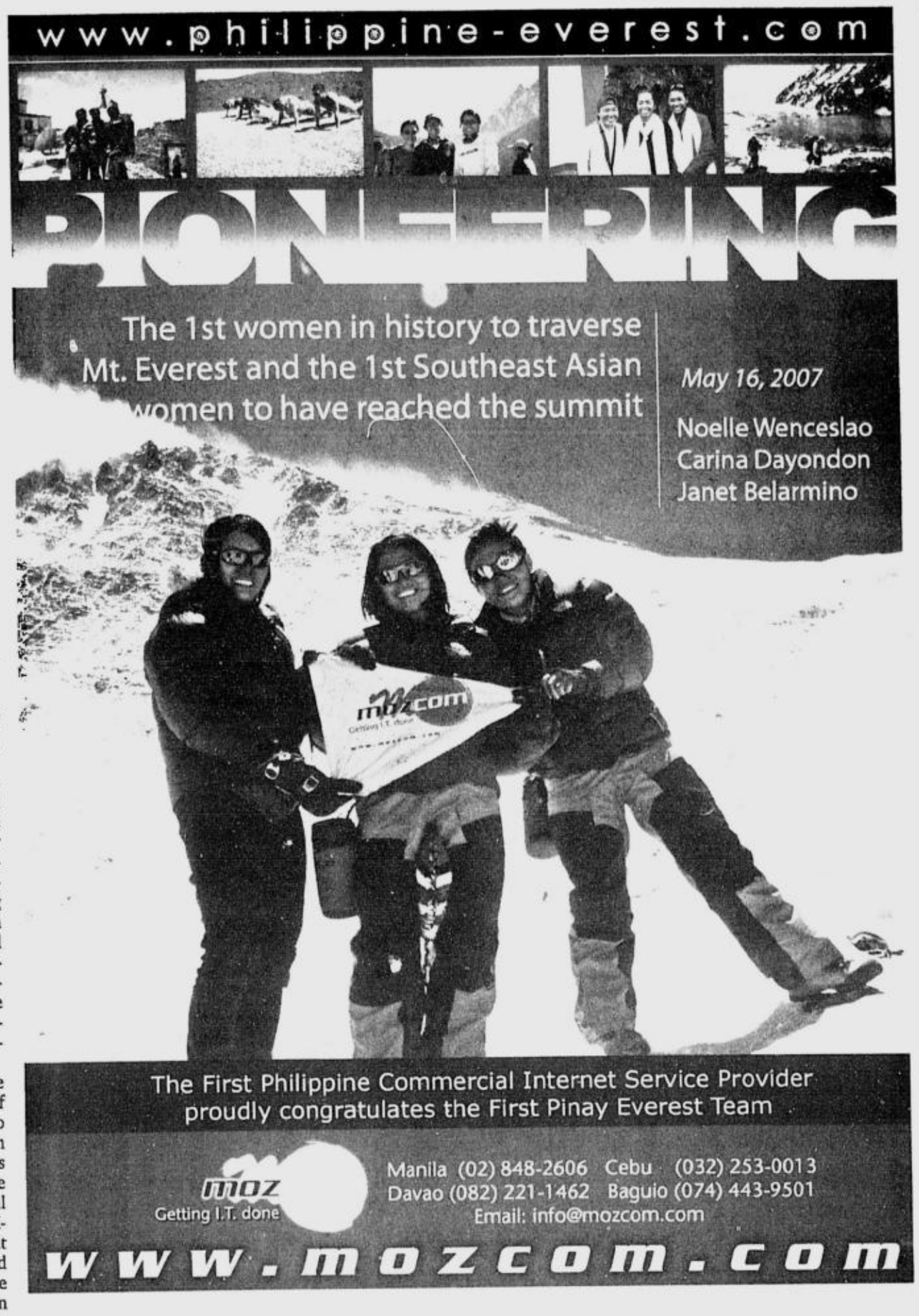
PEZA Resolution No. 06-512 provides for two areas of medical tourism investments that may be registered and, thereafter, be granted incentives. In the first area, the Resolution enumerates a number of medical and non-medical services that can be registered. These enterprises and activities must cater primarily to foreign patients, must comply with Department of Health ("DOH") standards, and must secure DOH endorsement. Endorsement from the DOH means that the medical enterprise has earned an accreditation from the Philippine Council for Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations ("PCAHO") or from the Joint Commission International ("JCI").

The fiscal incentives under this area include: (1) four years Income Tax Holiday ("ITH") on income solely derived from servicing foreign patients; (2) upon expiry of the ITH, payment of five percent Gross Income Tax on income solely derived from servicing foreign patients, in lieu of all national and local taxes; and (3) tax and duty-free importation of medical equipment. The two non-fiscal incentives are: (1) employment of foreign nationals and (2) a grant of the Special Investor's Resident Visa.

The second area of investment refers to the registration of medical tourism parks or centers. The medical parks and centers have to be located in priority areas identified in or consistent with, the National Policy Framework for Implementing Medical Tourism Program of the DOH. The park may be an existing, new or proposed complex which has a minimum lot area of one hectare. On the other hand, the center may be an existing, new or proposed medical hospital or stand-alone building that is host to specialized medical clinics and other specialized medical related activities. A stand-alone building, other than a medical hospital, shall have a minimum floor area of 5,000 square meters for Metro Manila and Cebu City, and 2,000 square meters minimum floor area for the provinces. The fiscal incentive for economic zone developers or operators of proposed and partially developed medical tourism parks or centers located outside Metro Manila and Cebu City shall be entitled to pay a special five percent tax on gross income, in lieu of all national and local taxes, except real property tax on land.

If the enterprise is not located in an economic zone under PEZA, it may be registered under the BOI. The incentives under BOI are the following: (1) Income Tax Holiday for four to six years if it is a new project; (2) Income Tax Holiday for three years on incremental sales revenue if the project is existing or for expansion; (3) additional deduction from taxable income for labor expense; and (4) modified duty rate on imported equipment. As of late last year, the BOI is yet to formulate a tailor-fit incentives package for the medical tourism industry. As such, registration under the PEZA may give more incentives.

The Philippine medical industry may be facing some problems such as migration of health practitioners, and lack of resources to update technology and conduct research. In any case, it is clear that medical tourism is gaining ground in the service sector. The Philippines currently ranks fifth in medical tourism behind Asian countries like Thailand, India, Malaysia and Singapore, in that order. Cooperation between the public and private sectors is needed to sustain this drive towards our competitive edge. Perhaps, even faith healing or alternative medicine will be included in some of the medical tourism packages.

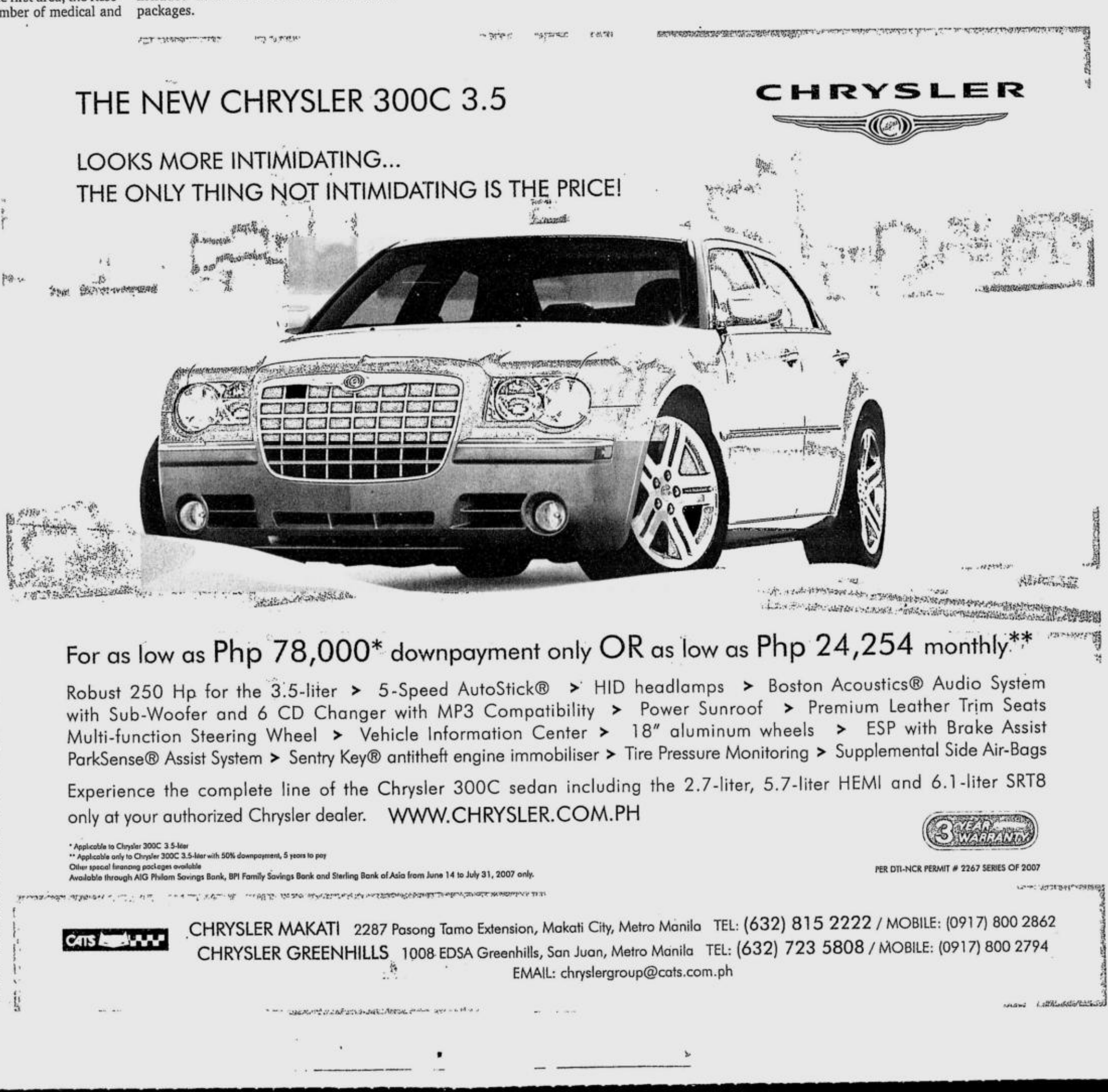


New insurance products

NIPPON LIFE INTRODUCES new insurance policies and riders.

Nippon Life Insurance Company of the Philippines (NLP), the first full service overseas company of Nippon Life Insurance Japan, has launched a new set of insurance products for the year.

The company has added four insurance plans and five insurance riders in its product menu. These include upgraded Prime Value series; Total and Permanent Disability, Waiver of Premium, Critical Illness Waiver, Critical Illness Benefit, Critical Illness Plus and the Hospitalization Benefit Rider.



BUSINESS Friday

Be an Inquirer.

The replacements

Q: WE JUST GOT A MANDATE FROM OUR global office to kill one of our products. It is in a really strong market and has attained an equally strong participation in it. After some months, we've identified a suitable replacement product. How should we introduce this replacement product to the same market base? What will guarantee a smooth transition?

A: There are of course many considerations to take. We'd like to focus on two key considerations: (1) transitioning with consumers, and (2) transitioning with your sales people.

Your major concern (among many others) in transitioning with your consumers is how to transfer the image of quality of the replaced brand to the replacing brand. Assuming that product development has successfully given the quality of the replaced brand to the replacing brand, the issue of smooth transition with consumers becomes a matter of equating in the minds of consumers the replaced brand with the replacing brand.

One way of accomplishing this is to follow the process of conditioning that Ivan Pavlov, the Russian physiologist, successfully demonstrated in his experiment with dogs. Pavlov, who was actually doing research on the role of salivation on the digestive system, discovered that his dog will still salivate from just the ringing of a bell without food being served. This will happen once the dog has been conditioned to associate the ringing of a bell and the serving of food. The conditioning process goes along these steps:

Ring a bell, serve food; dog salivates.
Ring a bell, serve food; dog salivates.
Serve food, ring a bell; dog salivates.
Serve food, ring a bell; dog salivates.
Ring a bell; dog salivates.

The ringing of the bell has successfully been embedded in the dog's brain as the same as the serving of the food. So with just the ringing of the bell, it salivated even without food being served.

How will this work with your replaced and replacing brands? For easier explanation, let's give a name to each of the brands here and let's say we're talking about an instant noodle soup category. Call the replaced brand as "Intercontinental Instant Noodle Soup" and the replacing brand as "Royco Instant Noodle Soup." Next, let's say that your global head office gives you two and half or three years to follow its mandate. Here's how the transfer of the meaning of quality soup will happen when you do this on, say, the brand package. Please observe the differences in the type size.

1st half year: **Intercontinental Soup**, Royco Soup; **Quality Noodle Soup.**

2nd half year: **Intercontinental Soup, Royco Soup; Quality Noodle Soup.**

3rd half year: **Royco Soup, Intercontinental Soup; Quality Noodle Soup.**

4th half year: **Royco Soup**, Intercontinental Soup; **Quality Noodle Soup.**

5th half year: **Royco Soup; Quality Noodle Soup.**

Can this really happen? Yes and it did happen precisely to Royco Soup of Unilever way back in the 50s. And it had happened and continues to happen to quite a few other brands faced with a similar dilemma. Did you notice the way the Magnolia ice cream brand name was slowly phased out by the Nestlé brand name when Nestlé bought Magnolia? (Nestlé bought Magnolia ice cream in 1996 from San Miguel Corp. In 2004 the Magnolia brand ice cream was relaunched by San Miguel). Anyway, Nestlé did the brand name replacement/conditioning game in the same manner. First it was:

Magnolia Nestlé Ice Cream.
Then it became **Nestlé** Magnolia Ice Cream
Then it was just **Nestlé** Ice Cream

Condition your consumers the same way Pavlov did so that they accept changes and replacements easily and smoothly. (By the way, Pavlov did win a Nobel Prize in 1904 for his research work on "conditioning." So apply this Nobel Prize-winning technique to your marketing and you'll see consumers "salivating" for your product.)

Now, what about the second consideration concerning the effect on your sales people?

We're often asked: "Why are the sales people a major consideration?" This question has a simple answer. In any company, sales people are responsible for generating sales. We suppose that's why we call their department the sales department. Anything that affects the sales people's motivation and capacity to deliver sales should obviously concern any company's top management.

If the about-to-be replaced brand is a leading brand, it's easy to appreciate that this is a major source of sales, incentives and bonus for your sales people. That's your most basic problem here. For your sales people it's all about their take-home pay.

So address this concern directly. Give a realistic assurance that sales from the replacing brand will be equal to and will grow just as much as the replaced brand. Back up this assurance with a good and doable plan to make it happen. A key part of that plan is your campaign to get the quality image of the replaced brand effectively transferred to the replacing brand.

Present this plan of yours to your sales force and sincerely solicit comments and suggestions. Get more and more of your sales people to buy in into the transition and become part of the solution instead of being part of the problem.

Keep your questions coming. Send them to us at MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net. God bless!

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PHILIPS INKS DEAL WITH WWF. Philips Electronics and Lighting Inc. and The World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines recently signed a memorandum of understanding to join forces and bombat climate change. Under the Climate Savers Program, Philips and WWF will work hand-in-hand in creating various awareness programs to prevent global warming with simple and practical solutions on energy management. The partnership allows Philips to carry the "Climate Savers" logo in all of its energy-efficient lighting products. Photo shows WWF-P president Jose Ma. Lorenzo Tan and Philips CEO Rico A. Gonzales.

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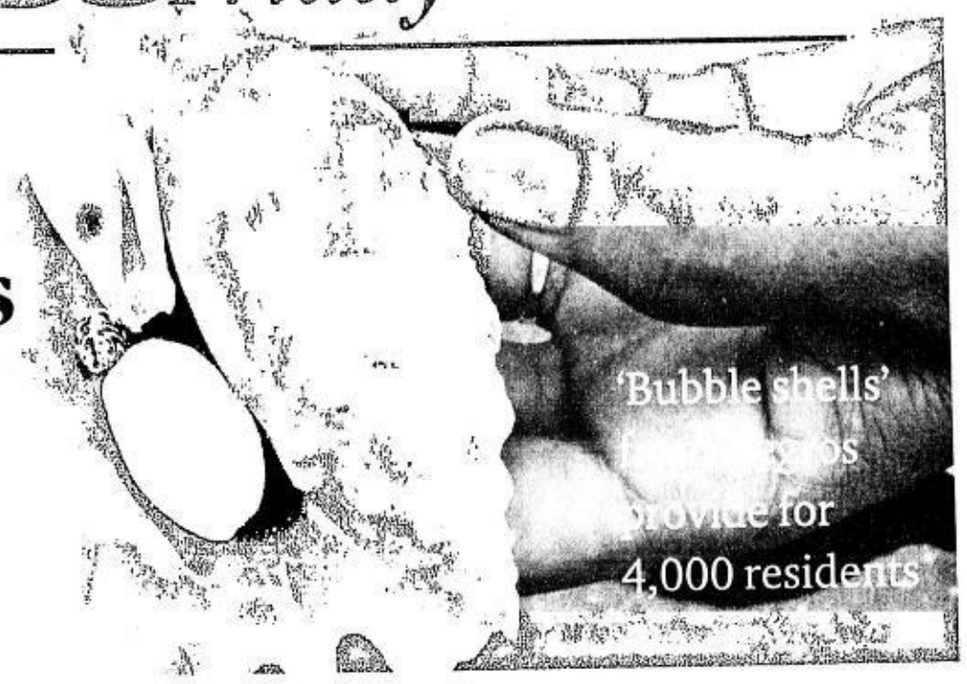
Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

BUSINESS Friday

Decor for some, source of income for others



By Hazel P. Villa
Inquirer Visayas

SAGAY CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL—ONE may think that the fascinating and varied shell craft accessories and decors bought at affordable prices in Cebu, Iloilo, Bacolod and Boracay are from these places.

Chances are, most of these shells, especially the teardrop-shaped white "bubble shells," often used as curtains and chandeliers, came from the small island-community of Molocaboc in Sagay City, Negros Occidental that has a seemingly endless supply of more than 11 varieties of shells.

Such is the economic relationship between Cebu City's shell craft manufacturers and their shell suppliers that Molocaboc residents speak Cebuano better than Hiligaynon and cross to Cebu more than they travel to Bacolod City.

MOLOCABOC has over 11 varieties of shells.

"If we can't deliver the shells for some reason, the Cebuanos come over and get it themselves," says 58-year-old Delfin Pasaylo, one of Molocaboc's elders.

Pasaylo claims that the particular type of bubble shells that surround the island are found nowhere else but in Molocaboc, one of the four islands within the 32,000-hectare Sagay Marine Reserve in northern Negros Occidental that is also home to the reefs Carbin, Macahulum and Panal.

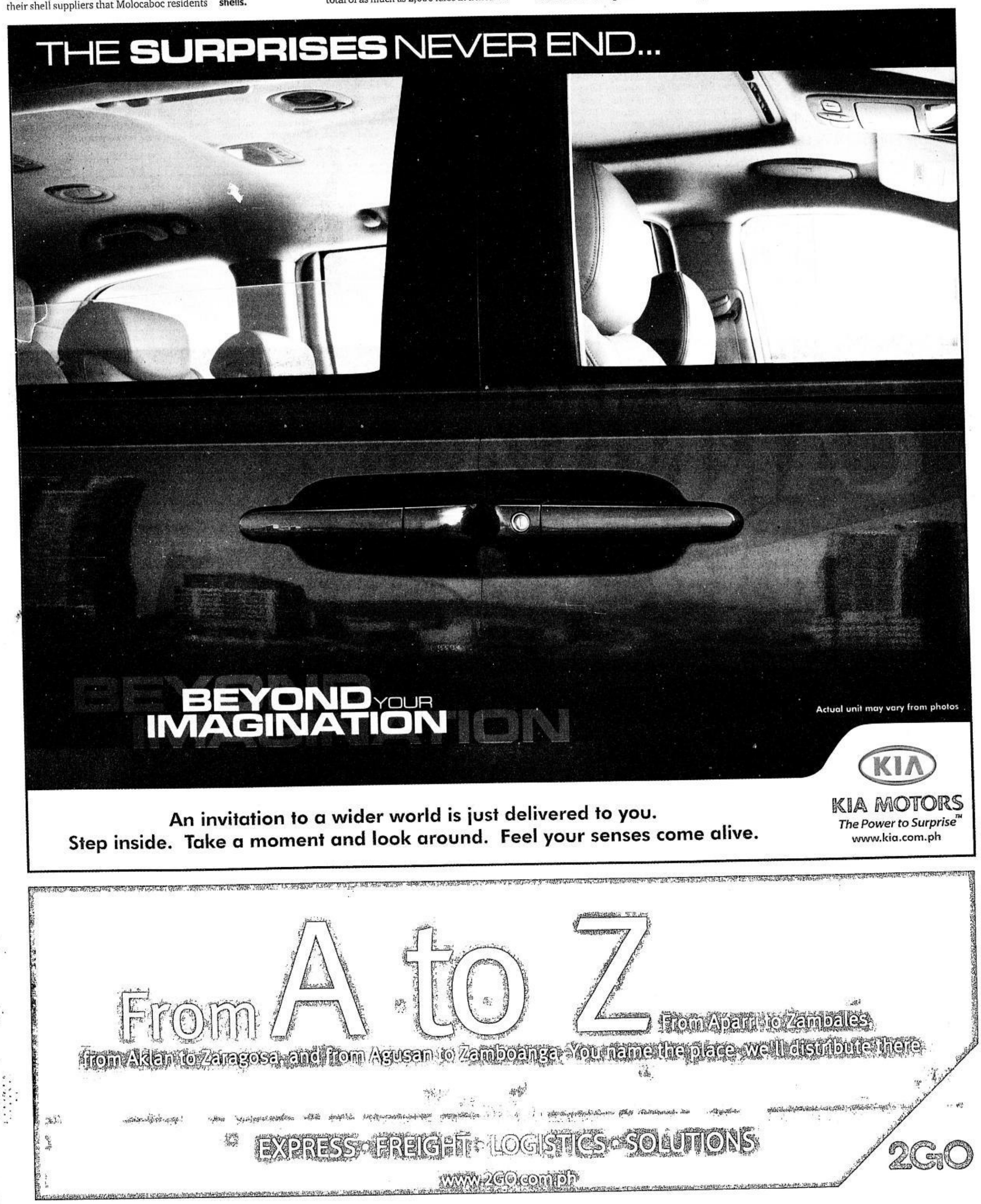
Some 15 to 20 families gather the bubble shells daily at low tide and sell these at P48 per kilo with the families sometimes gathering a total of as much as 2,000 kilos in a month.

Village councilman Antonio Pasaylo says he is already 38 "but there was never a time we ran out of bubble shells. Were it not for the shells, people here would go hungry."

The island of more than 4,000 residents subsist on fishing and other marine products but when inclement weather comes, there are always the shells to gather and the Cebuano buyers to tide them over.

The younger Pasaylo says they have a barangay ordinance where people can get

DECOR/ B3-2



MAKING holes and stringing the white bubble shells together is tedious work that only a few residents would bother with.

JANE Batusin has a backyard industry.

Decor for some ...

From page B3-1

bubble shells at the east side of the island and anyone who goes beyond the boundary of this 10-ha gathering area would be fined P1,000.

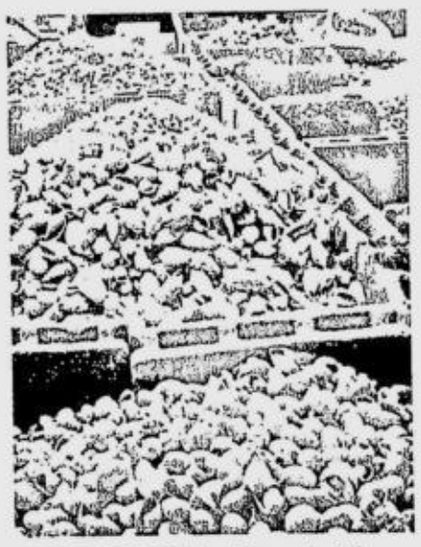
While there are bubble shells in the south side of the island, residents are prohibited from gathering these because their activities would destroy the abundant mangroves and sea grass of the award-winning Sagay Marine Reserve.

In 1997, the reserve was given the Galing Pook Awards for Top Ten Innovative Programs on Marine Conservation and Protection while in 2003, the Department of Science and Technology with the Philippine Center for Aquatic and Marine Resources Development cited it as the Best Aquatic Resources Management in the Philippines.

Cebuano shell craft manufacturers also have the option of buying the shells by strands, instead of per kilo.

However, with labor for stringing the shells together being too cheap, most of the island residents prefer to gather the shells and sell these to Cebu as raw material instead of processing and stringing these.

The few who engage in the backyard business of selling stringed shells also have buyers in Iloilo City and Boracay Island like Jane Batusin who pays her workers 25 centavos for every 23.5 centimeters of strung shells, 75 centavos for 150 cm and P1.50 for 210 cm.



MOLOCABOC Island is part of the Sagay Marine Reserve

"Sometimes we cannot cope with the delivery requests," says Batusin who oversees some 20 workers, some stringing shells by natural light in her small nipa hut.

Batusin had taken over her mother Dionisia Nemenzo's business of making shell chandeliers and vases that she sold in the cities of Cebu and Bacolod during their festivals.

Joining these festivals paid off because she met five of her current buyers who would order P15,000 to P20,000 worth of stringed shells at a time.

Like in most Philippine island-communities, there is much to be desired when it comes to upgrading backyard businesses like that of Batusin's but the locals are seemingly content with gathering the shells and selling them without a fuss to Cebuano buyers.

"These shells solve the hunger problem here," says Cherry Camiso, village secretary of Molocaboc who also strings shells for a living. Either way, the winner is the thrilled shopper who goes home with the very affordable decorative shell craft or souvenirs from the shops of Iloilo, Bacolod, Boracay and Cebu.

As more women travel, tourism opportunities rise

By Ronnel W. Domingo

WOMEN ARE SEEN AS A STRONGER driving force in Asian tourism as they establish firmer roles in business and the economy and are expected to help bring up business related to travel as they look for shopping and beauty and wellness destinations.

According to travel service firm Abacus International, women travelers were playing a major role in the development of the Asian travel industry with about 125 million trips a year.

Don Birch, Abacus chief executive, says studies and trends show the increasing influence of women in the growth of the travel business, hospitality and tourism sectors would prevail for at least the next 10 years.

"From the young to businesswomen to energetic grandmothers, Asian women traveling more often and further solo, in pairs with their female companions or as members of women-only interest groups," Birch says.

Citing data from several MasterCard studies, Abacus says trips made by Asian women had doubled to two out of five since the mid-1970s.

Birch says there were many factors—demographic, economic and lifestyle—that lay behind the rising proportion of women travelers, but the biggest one was that women were traveling more because they could.

MasterCard data show, he says, that 42 percent of women surveyed in major Asian countries and territories had traveled in the past year compared to 37 percent among men.

In Asia, the most active women travelers were from Tokyo, Singapore, Taiwan, Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong, Seoul, Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur.

These travelers tend to have higher education levels, high disposable income and are tech-savvy and increasingly adventurous, according to Abacus.

Birch says that the number of women corporate travelers were also increasing.

Businesses and tourist destinations who want to lure these women would benefit to know what they look for in an overseas destination.

MasterCard said the top five activities for female travelers were shopping, culture or historic interest, beach resorts, nature or adventure and family resorts.

MasterCard also estimated that by 2011, women traveler shoppers could ring up $9 billion worth of purchases in the five cities of Singapore, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Seoul alone.

"To tap into the massive spending power of women travelers effectively, travel service providers such as airlines, hotels, resorts restaurants and banks must first understand the needs and wants of women travelers," Birch said.

Abacus said health, wellness and beauty were high on women travelers' agenda .

Further, women were also making their influence felt as green travelers, contributing to the growing number of eco-retreats and attractions.

But Birch said many women have concerns about traveling alone, such as how well they would adapt to the local culture, religion and environment as women.

He said innovative moves observed among hotels were the provision of secured floors that were for women only.

Passion and desire on overdrive

THE ALL NEW KIA RIO

When the all-new Rio B segment sedan was unveiled at the North American International Auto Show in January 2005, and the 5-door version debuted at the Geneva Motor Show in March of the same year, the international motoring press had reason to gush at the spectacular fashion with which the emergent Korean car manufacturer continues to reinvent and recreates itself.

Already recognized as a value leader in the entry-level segment, the all-new Rio 4-door sedan that rolled out of the red carpet had that distinctive flair and panache, the kind that piques the interests and tickles the fancy of car enthusiasts around the world.

A distinguishing new look

Designed to stand out from the crowd in the entry-level segment, the all-new Rio's European-inspired exterior design radiates a youthful personality and provides a more athletic stance and a more significant, yet modern appearance. Changes to the front of the Rio include an aggressively styled black mesh grille, swept back headlamps and bumpers with back inserts.

A distinctive black side body molding runs the length of both the front and rear doors and ties into the black inserts on the bumpers, creating a unified look with subtle wedge shape. Sculpted arches at each fender contribute to the Rio's wide assertive stance.

Improved performance

With increased horsepower and torque while achieving reduced emissions from the previous generation vehicle, the all-new Rio offers improved performance

Its new 1.6 liter DOHC engine, which incorporates continuously variable valve timing, produces 110 horsepower and 107 lb-ft. of torque and can be mated to either a five-speed manual or an optional, electronically controlled four-speed automatic transmission.

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Zobel, SyCip, taipans join PCCI

PCCI PRESIDENT Emeritus Alberto P. Fenix Jr., Jose T. Pardo, Ambassador Francis Chua and Federico Lopez

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CHAMBER MOVEment history, the country's most successful and influential business leaders have formally joined the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), forming the Chamber's eminent Council of Advisers.

Under the leadership of PCCI president Samie Lim, the advisory body was formed to further PCCI's role as the "voice of Philippine business" and catalyst in creating wealth for the nation.

This historic initiative was done in line with the Chamber's commitment to gear the country toward being united and competitive to regain national pride under its "One. Global. Filipino." banner.

Lim said "it is high time to showcase the solidarity of the entire Filipino business community in moving the country forward." The council will actively participate and give invaluable support in championing PCCI's engagement in policy advocacy, business networking and enhancing the Chamber's reach in representing industries, local chambers and enterprises nationwide.

ANDREW Tan

SAMIE Lim with Fernando Zobel de Ayala (behind is Miguel Varela)

Alberto Fenix Jr., with PCCI executives Eric Cruz, Antonio Lopa and Edgardo Lacson

PCCI CHAIR Emeritus Miguel Varela, PCCI Internal Auditor Benjamin Punongbayan, Washington SyCip, PCCI President Samie Lim and Menardo R. Jimenez

The PCCI board of directors hosted a dinner of the council chaired by Jose Pardo. The member of the council are (in alphabetical order): Enrique Aboitiz, Ramon Ang, Jorge Araneta, Francis Chua, Eduardo Cojuangco, John Gokongwei, Andrew Gotianum, Menardo Jimenez, Oscar Lopez, Rafael Ortigas, Artemio Panganiban, Manuel Pangilinan, Jose Pardo, Enrique Razon, Henry Sy, Washington SyCip, Andrew Tan, Lucio Tan, Cesar Virata, George Ty, Alfonso Yuchengco, Fernando Zobel de Ayala.

The all-new Rio provides more standard horsepower than the Chevrolet Aveo, Toyota Echo and Hyundai Accent.

It also has a 1.4 liter DOHC engine that packs 94 horsepower and 12.7 kg.m of torque that delivers optimum performance and at the same time providing excellent fuel economy of 15.7 kms to a liter (based on 2006 DOE fuel economy test run).

The Rio is fitted with a 10 inch diameter front-disc brakes coupled with reliable rear drum brakes, providing sure stopping power at every drive you make.

Better handling, smoother ride.

Unlike many B-segment sedans that offer low-tech, entry-level suspension layouts, the all-new Rio features an independent front suspension and semi-independent rear suspension for responsive handling and ride comfort.

The Rio's suspension layout uses MacPherson struts with coil springs in front, and a torsion beam axle with coil springs in the rear, tuned to achieve a healthy balance between a comfortable ride and responsive handling. Front and rear stabilizer bars are standard on all Rio models. And aiding handling is a rack and pinion steering system.

The Rio's wider track and improved suspension and steering systems provide better handling characteristics and improved performance over the previous generation Rio. A longer wheelbase helped designers carve out more space for rear passengers while enhancing riding comfort.

More standard features

Occupant safety, as well as a long list of standard convenience features, is one of the defining qualities of Kia's recent wave of new products. The all-new Rio was engineered to provide a quiet, vibration-free cabin that would compliment the vehicle's improved performance and handling characteristics.

The all-new four-door Rio is available in two trim levels: Base and LX. Like all of Kia's vehicles, a generous list of standard features inside and out, including three-point seatbelts for all five seating positions, eight-way manually adjustable driver's seat, rear window defroster, variable intermittent windshield wipers, dual body-color outside mirrors and black side body molding.

The LX trim level offers additional standard equipment, including: full wheel covers, air conditioning, an AM/FM/CD audio system with four speakers, 60/40 split folding rear back seat and a height-adjustable steering column.

A Power Package - only available on the LX model - features power windows and door locks, power heated outside mirrors, front-door mounted tweeter speakers, and dual map lamps with sunglass holder.

•Just recently, the Kia Rio has been awarded by the Philippines' Car Awards Group Inc. as best Sub-compact vehicle for 2006.

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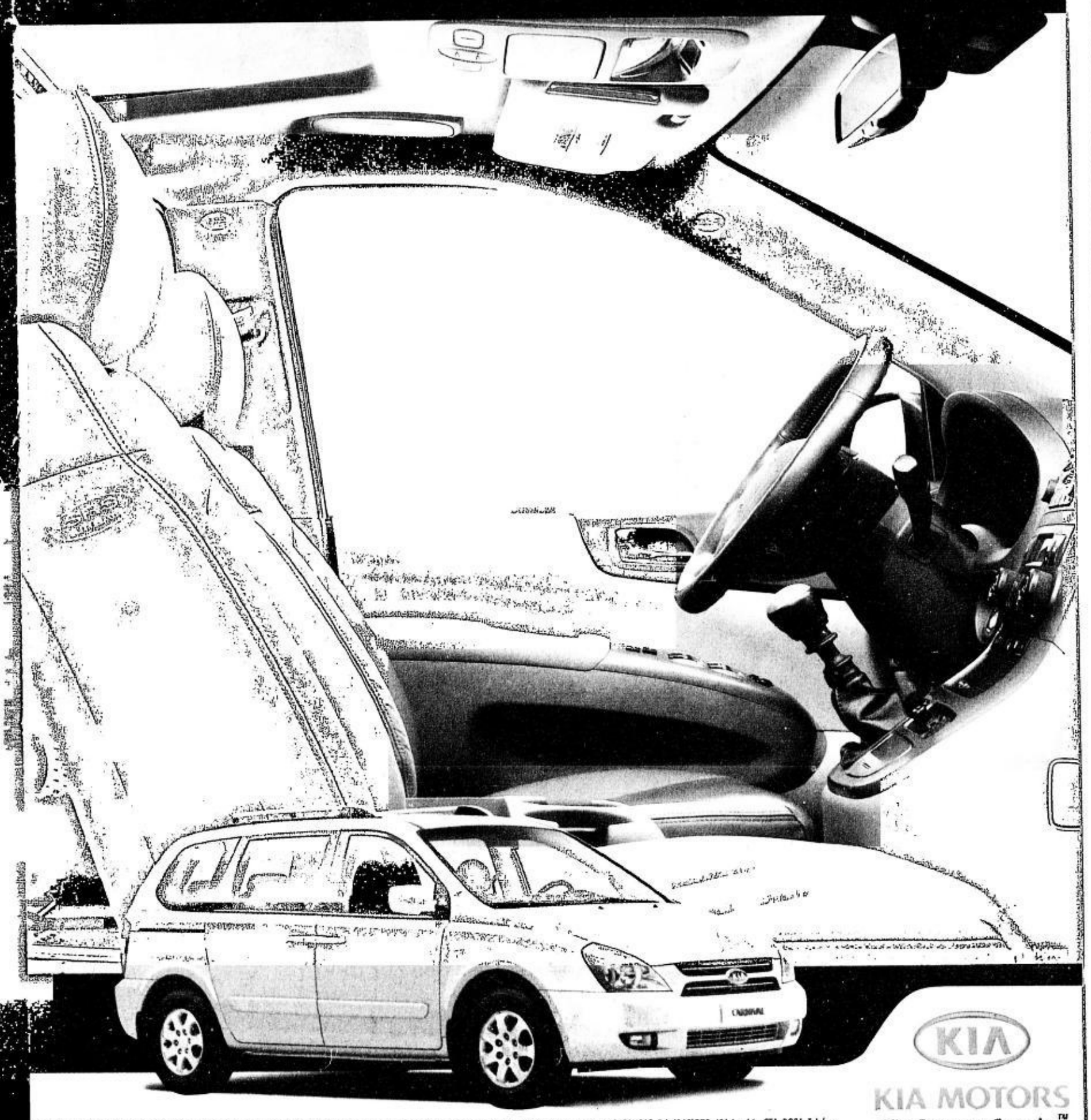

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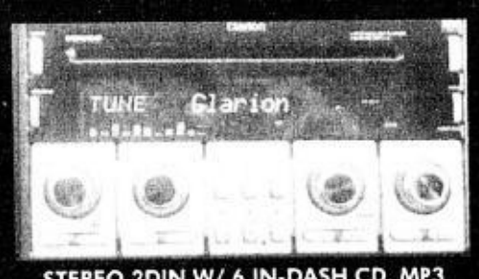

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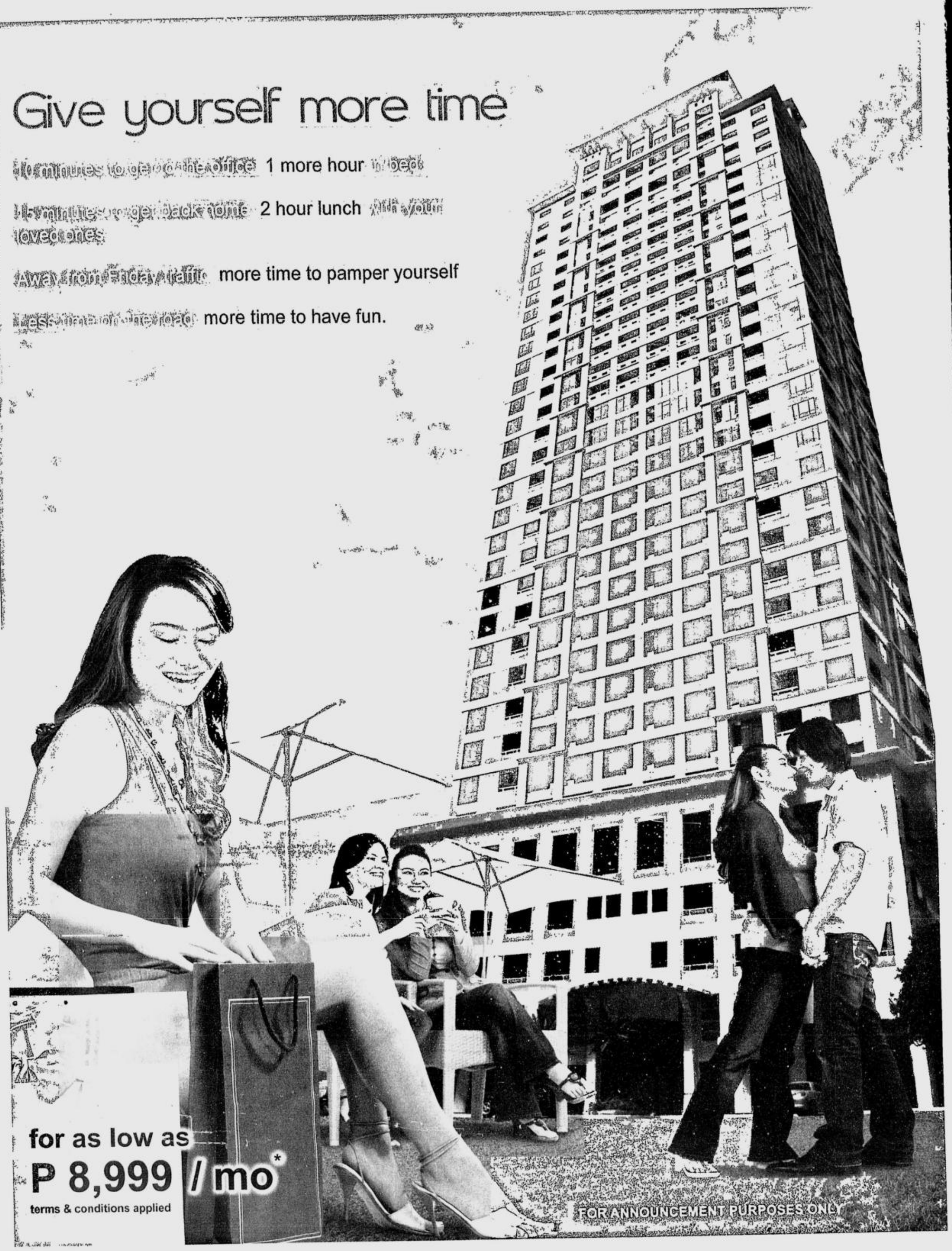

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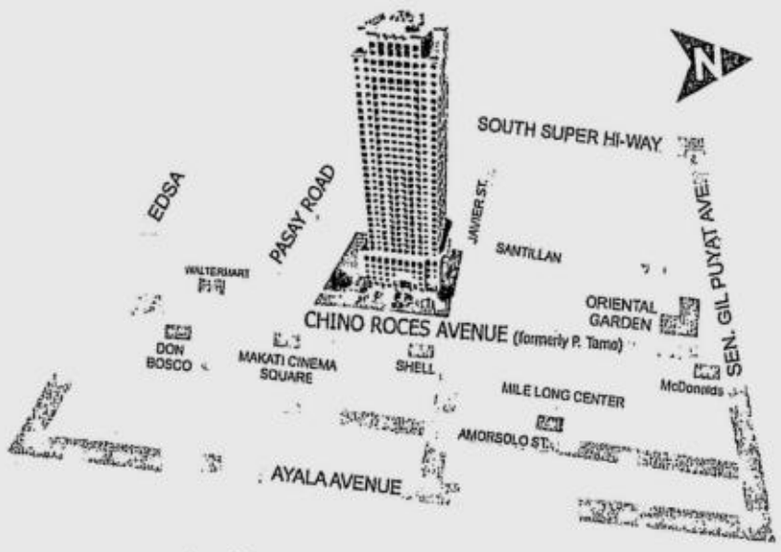

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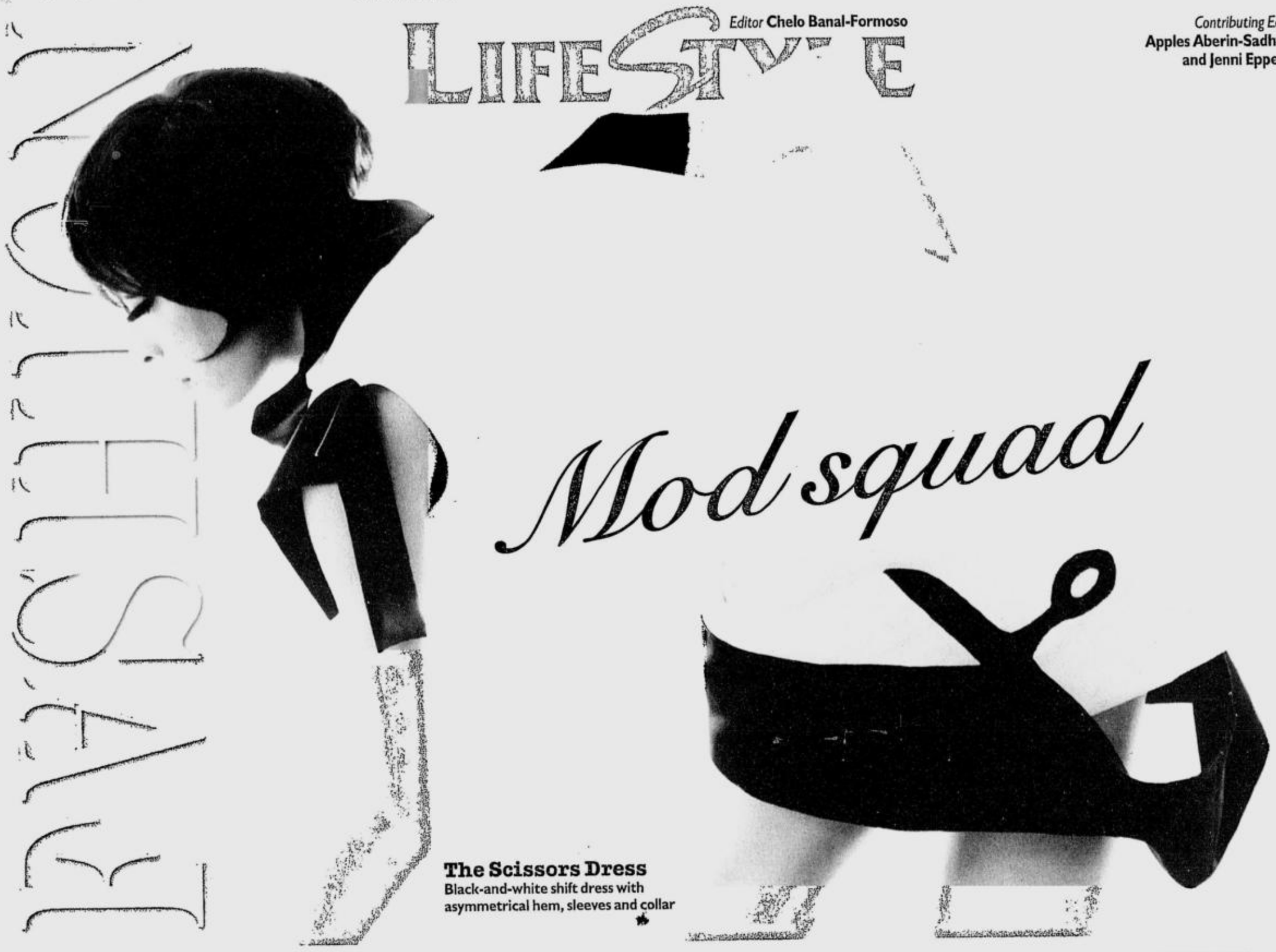


The Scissors Dress
Black-and-white shift dress with asymmetrical hem, sleeves and collar

Designing ad man

Before plunging full-time into the crowded and competitive world of haute couture, James Reyes worked for 11 years as a graphic designer for Campaigns & Grey

By Alex Y. Vergara

TAKE IT FROM JAMES Reyes, it's never too late to leave behind your comfort zone and shift careers. In his case, it took the fashion designer more than a decade to finally heed his true calling.

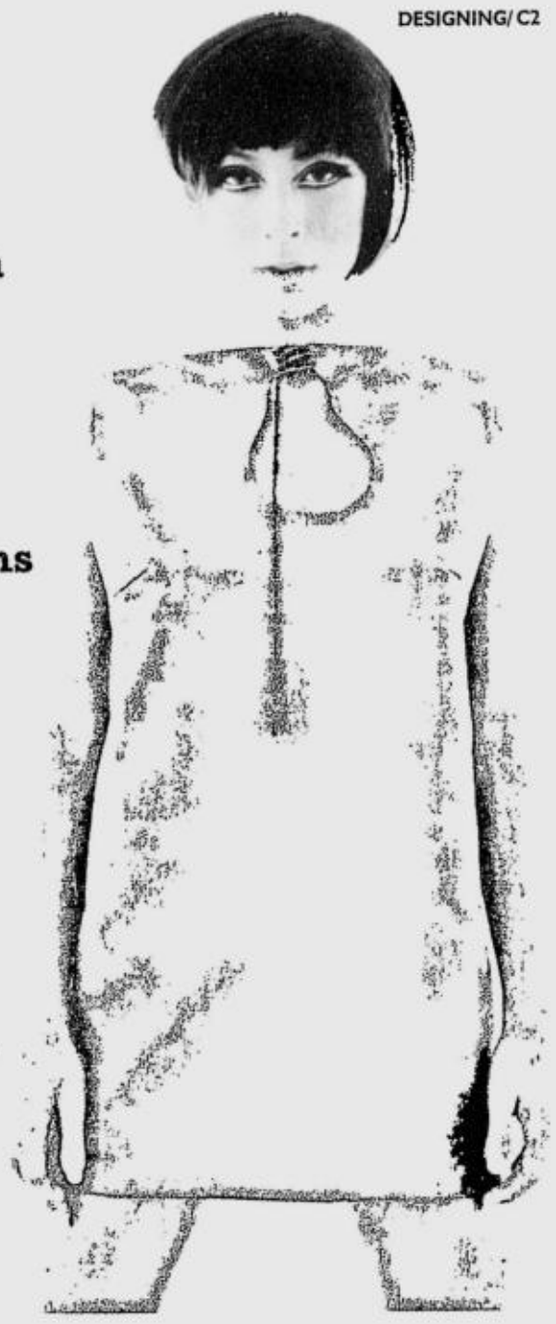
By virtue of his strong showing in a series of fashion shows over the last two years, Reyes is arguably one of the hottest young designers in the country today.

Not only does his clothes show his exceptional skill in cutting, they also reveal his keen eye for proportion as well as an intellectual side, which isn't lost (at least most of the time) on his audience.

"I don't want to be labeled as a revolutionary or avant-garde designer," he says one laid-back evening in his third-floor atelier in Makati. "Far from it, I like to keep my clothes simple but witty through little twists here and there."

Before plunging full-time into the crowded and competitive world of haute couture

DESIGNING/ C2



The Bulb Dress
Shift dress in gunmetal gray bridal satin with light bulb-shaped peek-a-boo and black beads

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Ayala Center Cebu

Designing ad man

The Casino Dress
Black satin shift dress with cube-shaped cap sleeves decorated with white buttons

Photography Lilen Uy
Sittings editor Millet Arzaga
Makeup Patrick Rosas
using Patrick Rosas G-lish collection, available at Rustan's Essenses.
Hair Noel Jimenez (0920-7415214)
Model Mia Ayesa
Design James Reyes (0917-6236183)

From page C1

sometime in 2004, Reyes worked for 11 years as a graphic designer for Campaigns & Grey.

Reyes was already the ad agency's art director when he decided to leave everything behind and open a shop. His experience as an artist (he also paints) seems to be serving him well as he works on a different and decidedly more unpredictable medium.

"I've always been interested in clothes ever since I can remember," he says. "In fact, I used to do fashion sketches when I was in high school."

His mom and a small circle of close friends benefited from his ideas. Come enrollment time, however, Reyes chose the more practical route by taking up fine arts major in advertising at the University of the Philippines.

Through the years, amid long days and sleepless nights catering to the whims of demanding, sometimes impossible clients, his love for fashion never waned.

First mentor

Reyes credits designer Greg Centeno, one of his first mentors, for keeping the flame alive. The wannabe designer used to hang out in Centeno's shop after having his clothes made.

"I used to stay there for hours during my free time," he says. "I got to talk to Greg and his clients and I soon realized that that was the kind of life I wanted."

His desire to shift careers was further fueled in 2001 when INQUIRER Lifestyle asked him to do a series of sketches based on the latest women's fashion. His drawings landed on this paper's Friday pages.

In between buying fashion books and attending basic pattern-making at Slim's during weekends, Reyes, upon Centeno's encouragement, joined the Mega Young Designers' Competition the following year.

Reyes reached the finals, together with Mitch Dulce, Alex Pigao and Ivarluski Aseron. Later that year, Reyes and a number of batchmates from Mega joined the annual competition organized by the Fashion Design Council of the Philippines.

As luck would have it, his work was among the five creations chosen to represent the country in Paris. Through it all, he managed to hold on to his day job at the ad agency.

"Yolly Ong, my boss at Campaigns, knew that it was only a matter of time before she would lose me to fashion design," says Reyes. "She was very encouraging, but, at the same time, worried that I didn't have enough experience to run a business."

The Zipper Dress
White shift dress with a deep-slashed back with black satin patchwork

The affirmation he got from members of the prestigious Young Designers' Group (YDG) was perhaps what finally pushed Reyes to cross to the other side. Dennis Lustico, then president of YDG, invited him to join their group as 2003 rolled in.

New collection

Indeed, leaving it all behind and going into fashion design full-time was a perfect way to start a new year. Still, it took Reyes another two years before he mustered enough courage to strike out on his own.

"I opened this shop in January 2005, and it's only now that I'm beginning to make money," he says with a knowing smile. "It helps that I deal directly with my sewers. I also do the cutting myself if I'm the only one who knows how a certain idea is supposed to work."

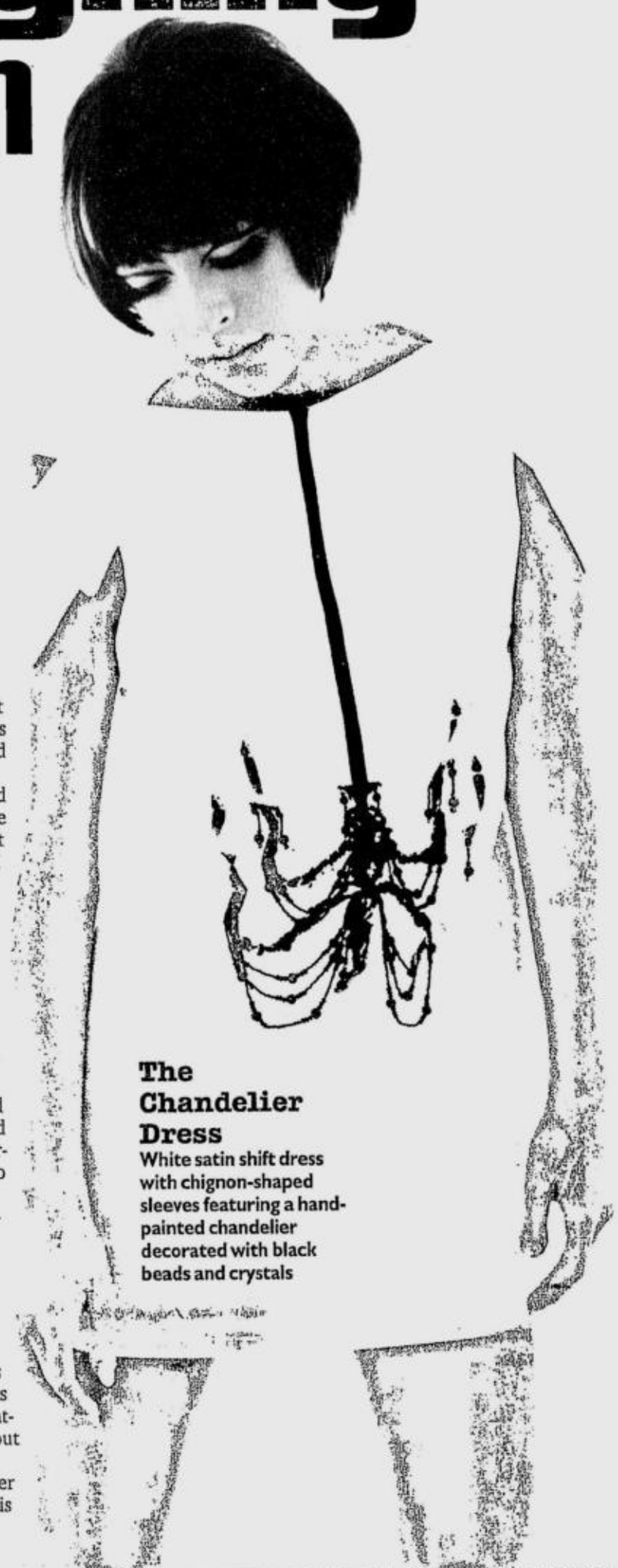
His latest collection consisting of black-and-white shift dresses, which debuted sometime ago during Philippine Fashion Week, were qualified hits. The idea wasn't lost on his audience, as each dress teemed with enough visual puns that elicited smiles from even the most jaded fashionistas.

Drawing inspiration from surrealism and pop art, Reyes produced clean, structured pieces made of duchess satin, taffeta and organdy (photos of several pieces plus two new creations accompany this article).

Huge patches in the form of contrasting silhouettes inspired by everyday objects like a teapot, a chandelier, a cat and a hand pulling down a supposed zipper betray their creator's background as a graphic artist, which suits Reyes just fine.

"I wanted to convey an instantaneous kind of visual humor," he says. "As soon as people see this particular collection, I wanted them to immediately get the joke without me having to explain it."

Indeed, old habits die hard. To a former ad man like James Reyes, the medium is still the message.



The Chandelier Dress
White satin shift dress with chignon-shaped sleeves featuring a hand-painted chandelier decorated with black beads and crystals

War of the worlds

It won't come as a surprise if we see attractive Brazilians peddling laundry soap and instant noodles on TV and along Edsa any day soon

From page C4

in Malaysia that protects local models from foreign competitors by banning the latter from competing with locals for lucrative deals.

"Foreign models are limited to doing runway shows in Malaysia," she said.

Above-board

As far as May Flores, managing director of T Models, one of several modeling agencies that have mushroomed as a direct result of this fly-in phenomenon, is concerned, every transaction she and her foreign "supplies" engage in are above-board.

She also debunked the existence of the Malaysian law that she said not only would promote protectionism, but also reverse—vainly—the advances of globalization.

"I have a Slovakian model who did a couple of cosmetics ads in Malaysia," Flores claimed. "I also went there with the Slovakian and an Australian [model], and we did several print ads and TVCs."

T Models has been in the business for a little over two years now. Apart from a partner in Singapore, Flores has partners in Brazil, Australia and Canada who provide her with a steady supply of young, highly trained models fit for the Philippine market.

These models are represented by mother agencies usually from their home countries, which get a 10- to 15-percent commission from income they generate abroad, while agencies like those managed by Flores get a standard 30 percent.

"I had no permits for my models when I first started," she admitted. "It later became SOP for us to secure a three-month work permit for each model from the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation."

T MODELS' stable of fit and fabulous foreign mannequins

Flores thinks that it pays to play by the rules even if it means shelling out P12,000-P15,000 per model to secure such permits.

Apart from sparing T Models from any legal headache that might crop up in the future, securing work permits for her supplies gives the agency a certain degree of protection from delinquent or unscrupulous clients.

"As a company rule," she added, "we don't get foreign models who are [aged] 18 and below."

Work permits

JL Domino, managing director of Chameleon International, gets work permits for her imports on a case-to-case basis.

Like T Models, Chameleon manages around six to seven foreign models at a given time. Unlike the former, however, it doesn't have a pool of local models.

"We're just a very small agency," said Domino. "In fact, we have yet to mark our first year in the business. If I sensed that the model is going to do good and perhaps stay beyond three months, I help him or her get the necessary papers."

The youngest model to join Domino's stable of lookers was 16. But before she allowed the minor to work, Domino secured a parental consent form signed by the girl's parents and faxed to her by the model's mother agency.

"My models pay taxes, too, since they're automatically deducted from their income," Flores added.

Agencies like T Models usually advance all expenses, including plane fare, work permit and room accommodations, which the model, in turn, settles before he or she leaves the country—granted that the model makes enough money.

"It can be a lucrative business once you get the right models, but it's not without its risks," said Flores.

Since both agencies don't have enough funds to send scouts abroad (neither Domino nor Flores has gone to Brazil), they rely on their partners' recommendations. Thanks to the Internet, they're easily able to get an idea of how a certain model looks.

Of course, since they'll soon be dealing with real people made of flesh and blood, the Internet is a poor substitute to face-to-face encounters. Except for a few disappointments—usually attitude problems on the part of some models—their keen eye for the "Pan-Asian" look has yet to fail them.

"They're free to do anything they want during their free time, as long as it doesn't affect their jobs or put their lives in danger," said Domino. "But I always remind them to follow house rules and be responsible for their actions."

A number of these models, especially those coming from Brazil, are products of broken homes. Most of them know why they're here, said Flores, and it's not to party every night. In fact, some of them send money to their families.

"Some use modeling as an escape from a life of poverty in their respective countries," said Domino.

Trade secret

Flores, who acts like a big sister to her models, let us in on a trade secret. Before she even thinks of sending them to go-sees and casting calls to impress prospective clients, she first engages her models in heart-to-heart talks even if their facility to speak English is often quite limited.

"In the absence of their real families, I want to make them feel that this agency is their family," she said. "I ask them what their primary reasons are for coming to the Philippines. I also try to impress upon them that the agency is instrumental in the fulfillment of their dreams."

It doesn't matter what their goals are, but as soon as a particular model misbehaves or is not performing up to par, Flores said she uses this bit of information to knock some sense into that person's head. It always works.

Both women are aware of how the development is affecting the livelihoods of not a few local models. If she only has a choice, Domino said she would much rather stick to developing local talents. Not only is her agency spared from the risks of flying in an unknown entity, she doesn't have to subject herself to all the trouble of getting this and that permit.

"Most of our local models are beautiful," she said. "But the market is always looking for new faces. We're just giving clients what they want."

Flores is more proactive in dealing with the situation. After all, she also manages the careers of such A-list Filipino models as Ria Bolivar, Melissa Frye, Carlo Adorador, Luke Jickain and a few others.

"We try to strike a balance," she said. "That's why for the past two years, we've been sending locals to 'stay' bookings in Singapore and Malaysia for two to three months. The exposure is good for them."

As a whole, Filipino models tend to take their bodies for granted, Flores observed. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, she never tires of reminding her local wards to take care of themselves physically. She also encourages them to take acting lessons if they are to excel in regional commercials.

Filipinos have got what it takes to conquer the world, she said. She didn't have to go far to prove her point. Her very own agency has been instrumental in clinching several juicy contracts in the US for tall and dusky Sharina Gutierrez, a Philippine-born model now based in New York.

If her star continues to shine, Gutierrez will soon join the ranks of Filipino models such as Anna Bayle, Melanie Marquez, Myrza Sison, Anna Lloren, Rocky Salumbides and more recently Charo Ronquillo, who have done well in the international scene.

And to think Gutierrez is not even what industry insiders in the Philippines would describe as "mixed" or Pan-Asian. In today's world without borders, it's not so much the model's look that counts, but being at the right place at the right time.

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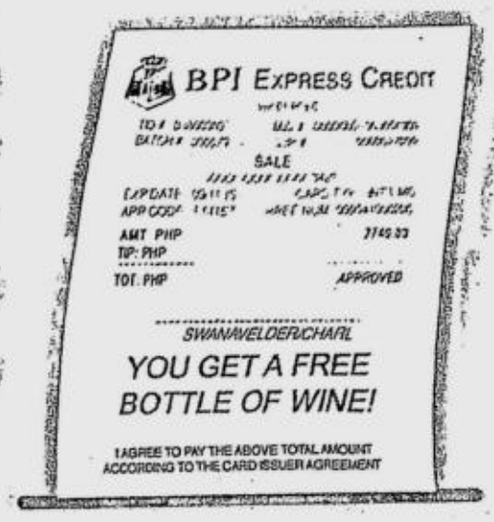

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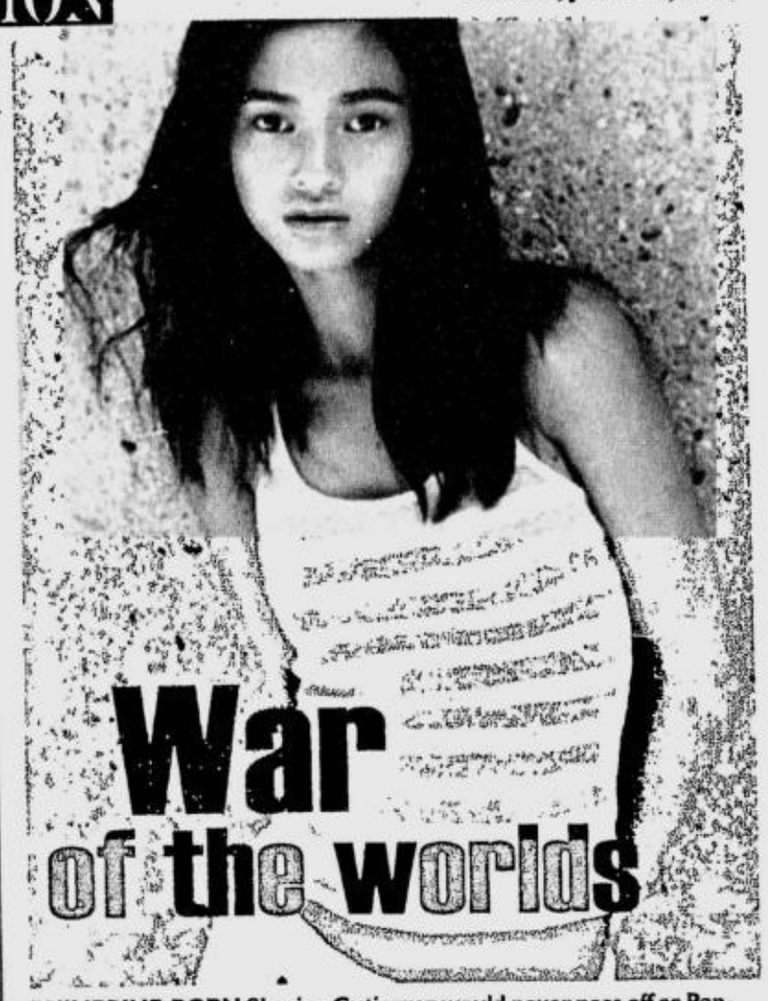

War of the worlds

PHILIPPINE-BORN Sharina Gutierrez would never pass off as Pan-Asian, yet the dusky model has clinched several juicy deals in New York, proving that there's a demand for Filipino models out there.

By Alex Y. Vergara

(Conclusion)

AS RECENT AS four years ago, foreign models from Latin America were virtually unheard of in Manila, and local mannequins dominated the ramp as well as print and TV commercials. Those happy, seemingly carefree days are now history.

"During our time, fly-in models were few and far between. We had our fair share of commercial and print work, and did all the fashion shows," recalled a semi-retired model, who requested not to be identified.

Indeed, you don't have to watch exclusive fashion shows staged by hip RTW labels to see how the equation has drastically changed. If anything, the foreign invaders' inroads are more palpable in the lucrative world of advertising.

These days, except for ad campaigns featuring local celebrities, a growing number of billboards, print ads and TV commercials (TVCs in advertising parlance) on fashion, beauty, fitness and lifestyle feature striking but unknown faces that aren't quite Filipino but don't look too alien either.

Chances are, these nameless endorsers are either Latin Americans (most likely Brazilians or Argentineans) or Eastern Europeans.

Apart from being in demand by companies in search of fresh faces, these foreigners are being lured to our shores by word of mouth.

Successful compatriots, who were brave enough to be the first to venture in a strange and faraway land called the Philippines, apparently spread the word of how easy it was to clinch rewarding deals here.

If this development gets any crazier, it won't come as a surprise if we see attractive Brazilians peddling laundry soap and instant noodles on TV and along Edsa any day soon.

Like Rissa Samson, president of the Professional Models Association of the Philippines, the semi-retired model also sees the development as a sign of the times.

For all the ill effects it has so far generated, she said, the development could also promote a "healthy" form of competition by keeping local models on their toes.

"The world is getting smaller, so globalization is inevitable," she reasoned. "However, we do need to have certain rules and regulations to make sure the industry has a more level playing field for all concerned."

Again, like Samson, she raised the question of whether or not these foreigners, who usually stay in Manila for as short as three months before packing their bags and flying to other Asian cities, pay the proper taxes and work permits.

Samson cited a supposed law

WAR/ C2

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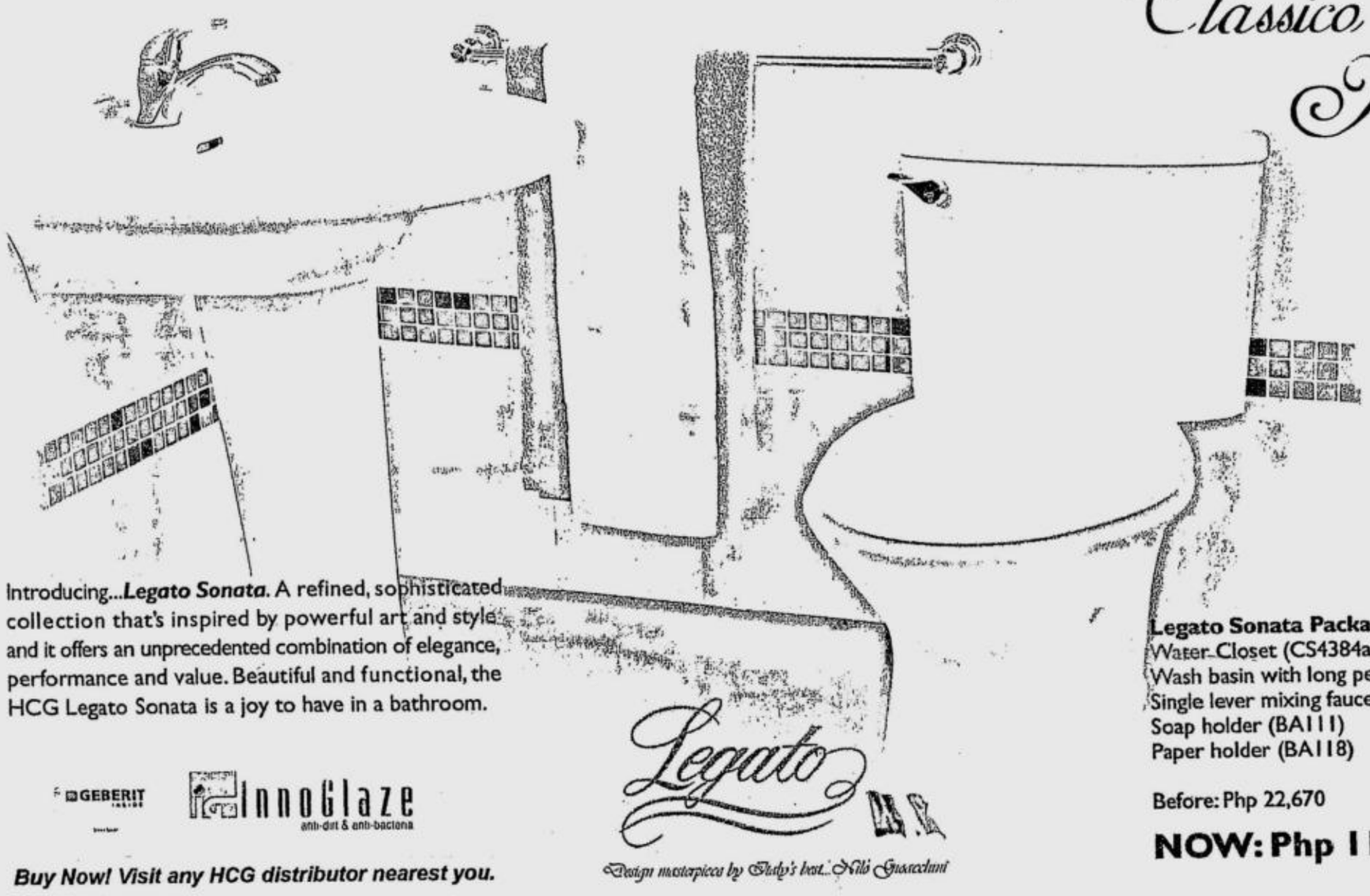

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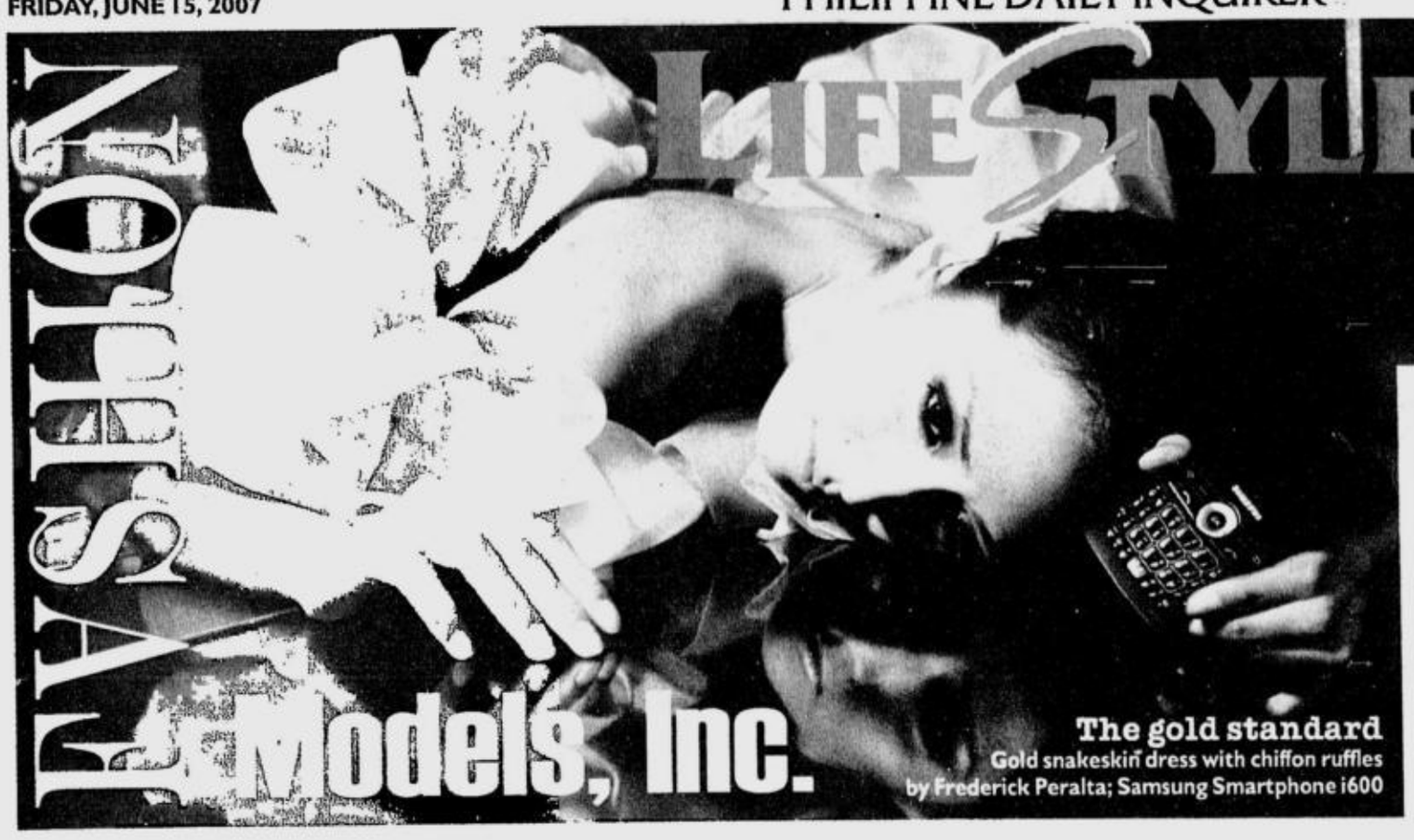

Models, Inc.

The gold standard
Gold snakeskin dress with chiffon ruffles by Frederick Peralta; Samsung Smartphone i600

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OPEN FOR FRANCHISING

AS FAR AS COLLABORATIONS go, the upcoming partnership between the Professional Models Association of the Philippines (PMAP) and Samsung may be one of the biggest ever in local fashion this 2007.

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

In celebration of PMAP's 20th year, Samsung is working with top director Jackie C. Aquino and the association, led by current president Rissa Samson, to stage a major fashion event entitled "Samsung Celebrates 20 Years of PMAP," on September 5 at the Rigodon Ballroom of The Peninsula Manila.

The PMAP is an organization/union (no, it is not an agency!) of professional models, run by models, who all have the confidence, talent and ability to manage their own careers. The first of its kind around the globe, its main objectives are to "uplift, protect and professionalize the modeling industry in the Philippines, and to develop and stabilize, national and international awareness, participation, involvement and competition in the field of modeling."

Co-founded in February 1997 by then top models Ronnie Asuncion, Tina Maristela-Ocampo, Tetta Matera-Ortiz, Izza Gonzales-Agana, Suyene Chi-Sia, Robert David, Jan Garcia, JB and Desiree Abesamis, to name a few, the PMAP was established as a response to less-than-ideal working conditions for local mannequins. The co-founders fought for sensible working hours and standardized salaries for bookings, most especially for fashion shows.

The PMAP has become a major force in the development of the local modeling industry, proving that models can band and work together for their own protection and progress. Succeeding members of the association continue to work on improving these standards while seeking the professional services of legal and financial consultants.

PMAP has staged several galas throughout its 20-year existence. In 1988, the association produced "PMAP and Friends," an event that brought together all sectors of the fashion in-

MODELS/ D2

Graphic elements
White Chinese-collared suit, white long-sleeved shirt, and black trousers, all by Rajo Laurel. White shoes, model's own; Samsung Smartphone i600

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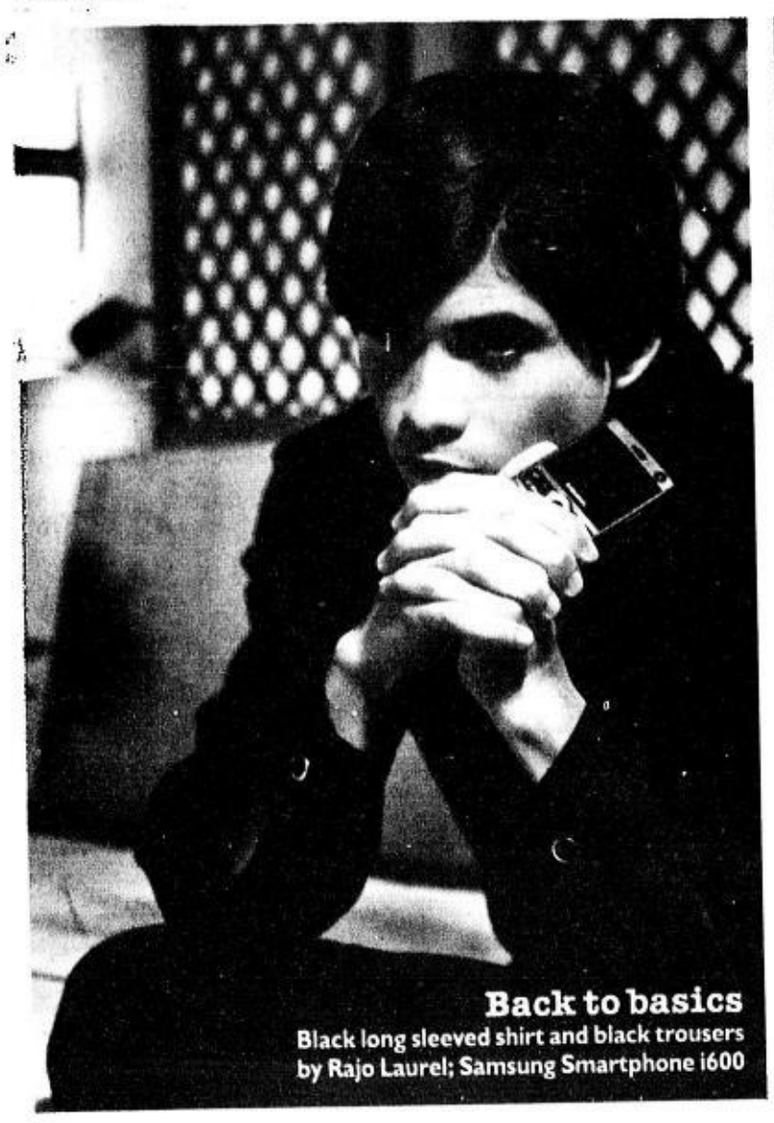


Back to basics
Black long sleeved shirt and black trousers by Rajo Laurel; Samsung Smartphone i600

Models, Inc.

From page D1

dustry—from designers, photographers, directors and the like. In 1990, PMAP co-produced another major show called "Halo-Halo, Sari-Sari," together with the Sari-Sari Store and PRO Masters, Inc.

For its 10th anniversary, PMAP produced Rajo Laurel's first ever gala at the GSIS podium. To celebrate its 12th anniversary, PMAP staged yet another event at the Grand Ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental, Manila.

Top designers

And now, in celebration of 20 successful years in the industry, PMAP, together with Samsung, is once again harnessing the talents of its members and past members, as well as industry insiders who've been a rich part of the association's long history, to stage another gala event.

Some of Manila's top designers will be participating in this much-awaited affair. Set to present especially designed capsule collections are Auggie Cordero, Ivarluski Aseron, Avel Bacudio, Patrice Ramos-Diaz, Rhett Eala, Lulu Tan Gan, Antonio Garcia, Marden Iglesias, Gerry Katigbak, Rajo Laurel, Jojie Lloren, Dennis Lustico, Tonichi Nocom, Randy Ortiz, Frederick Peralta, Renee Salud, Joey Samson and Inno Sotto.

Their creations will be worn not just by the current crop of models but by past members of the association as well.

Despite the numerous challenges, not to mention controversial stands, that PMAP has taken throughout these 20 years, the organization has survived with an even stronger resolve to protect and promote the interests of its members.

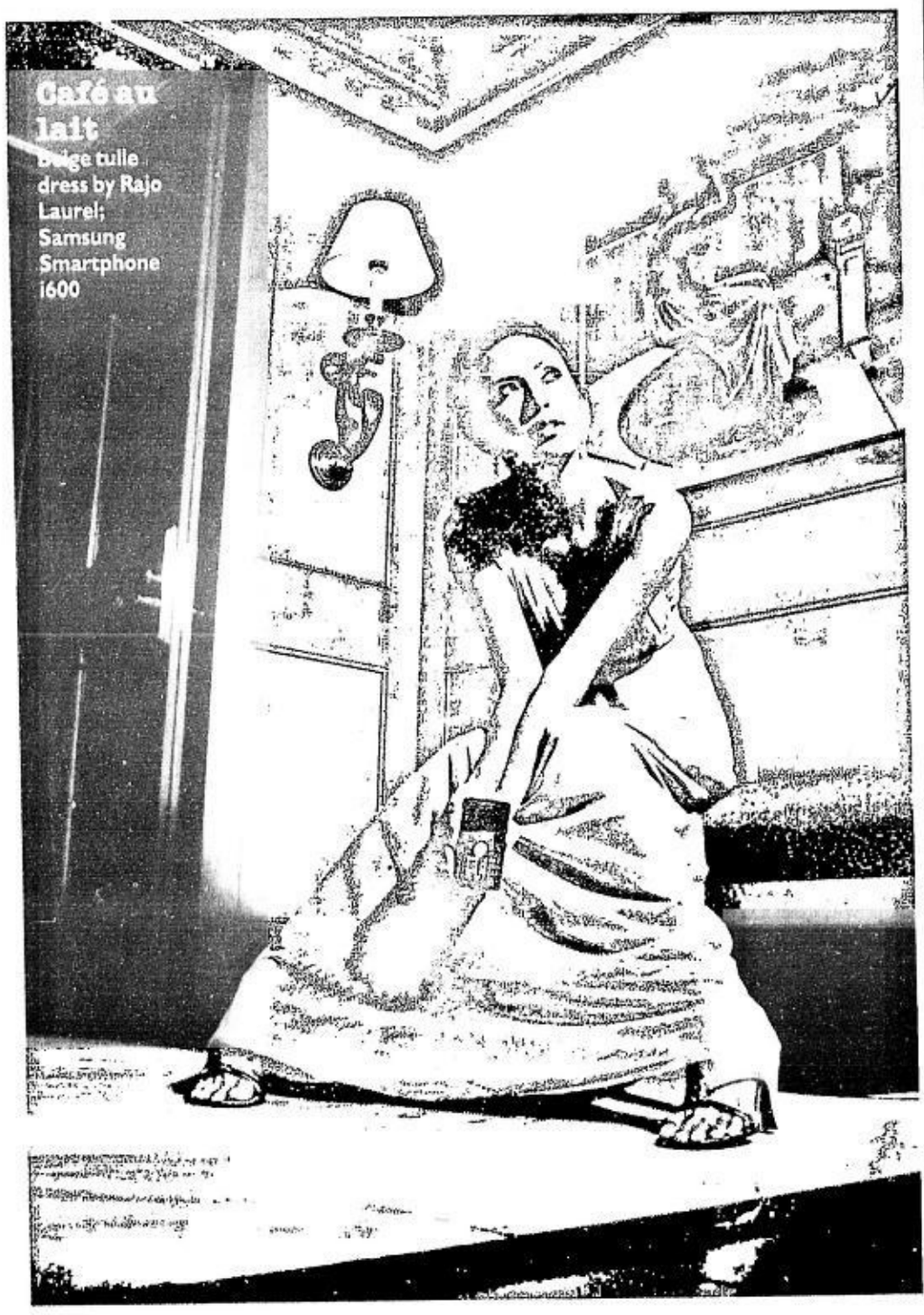
Congratulations to all past and present members of PMAP! Here's to another 20 years of camaraderie and collaborations!

Email the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph

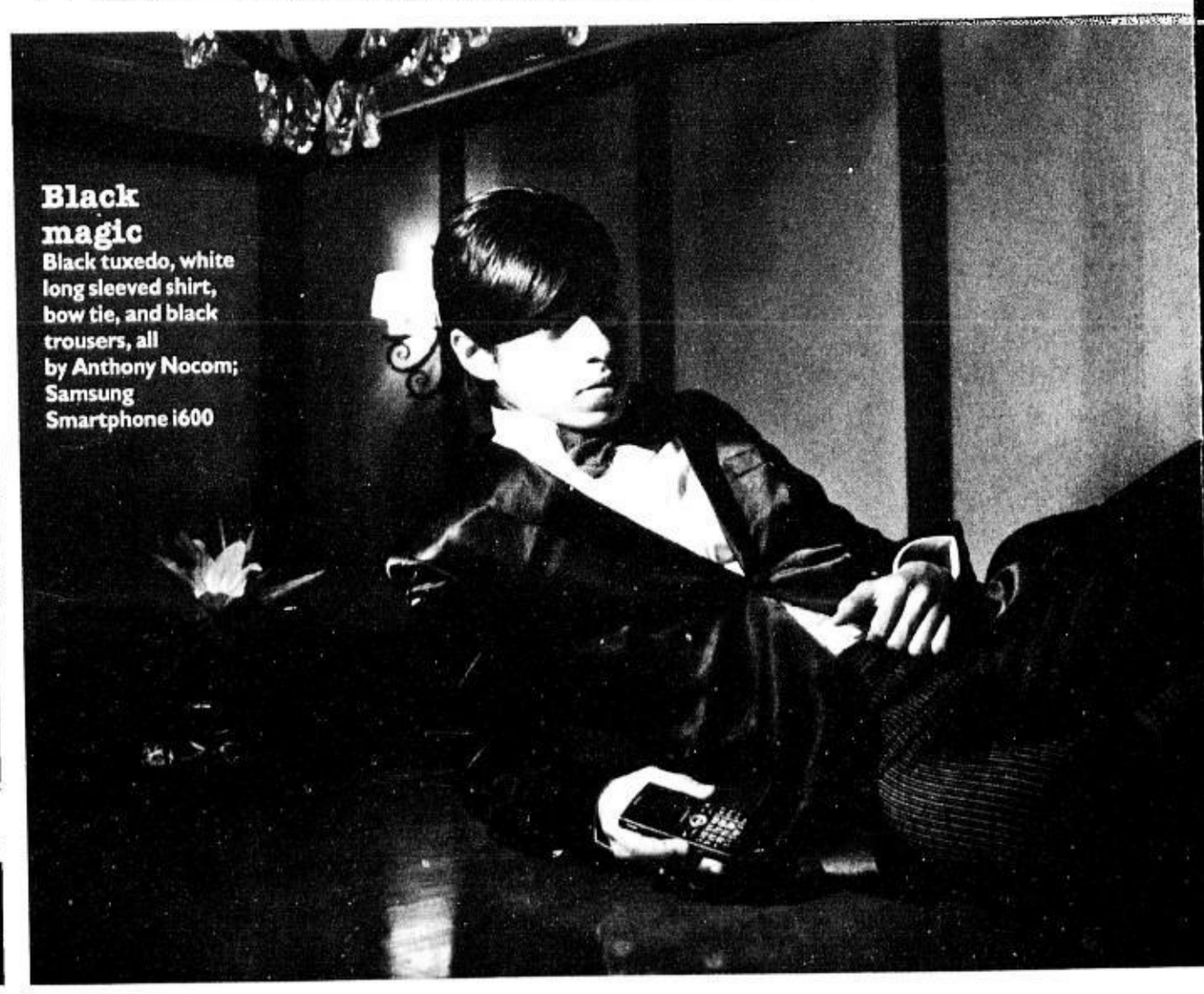
To celebrate 20 years of PMAP, the association is partnering with Samsung to stage a gala event on September 8

Crea
Piña jusi gown
by Patrice Ramos Diaz; Sa

Photography Charles Lu
Styling Ton Lao of PMAP
Make-Up Anna Rose Macarasg
of NARS Using The Spring 2007 Collection
Models Robby Manaquil
and Valerie De Los Santos of PMAP
Shot On Location at The Peninsula Suite
of The Peninsula Manila
Special thanks to Mr. Mariano Garchitorena
and Mr. Joseph Arias

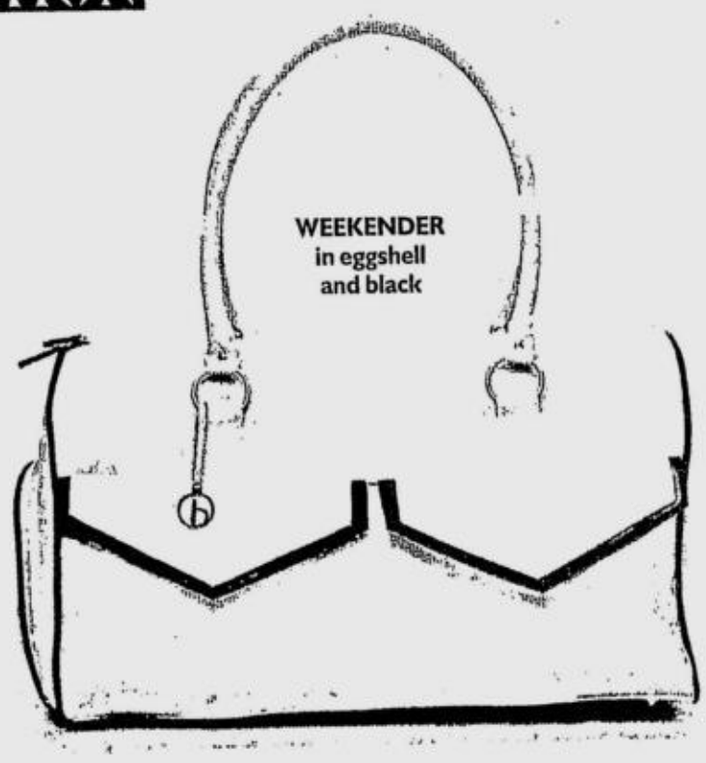


Café au lait
Beige tulle dress by Rajo Laurel; Samsung Smartphone i600



Black magic
Black tuxedo, white long sleeved shirt, bow tie, and black trousers, all by Anthony Nocom; Samsung Smartphone i600

my confection
with pleated skirt detail
msung Smartphone 1600



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The Bolso Manila Weekender Bag, on the other hand, is functional, flight-ready as a regulation-sized carry-on luggage and just as convenient for any road trip. Its spacious interior has three generous pockets and a zippered compartment that can instantly organize getaway essentials.

And the hidden shoe compartment accessible on the outer side of the bag is a novel design, eliminating the need for shoe bags.

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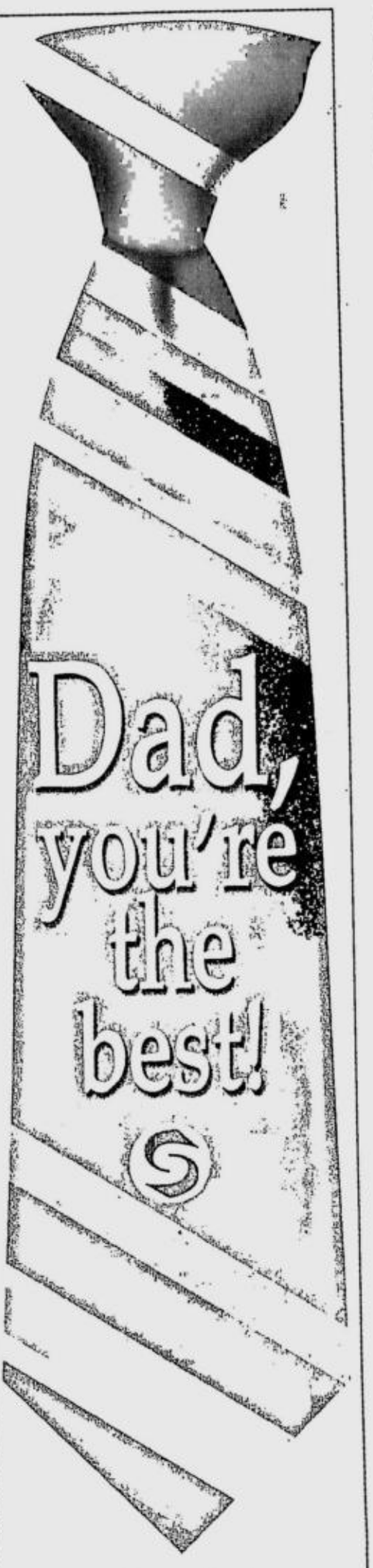


Show Dad how special he is by taking him to the Shang this June! The events, exhibits and values will surely make him happy.

Father's Day Promo!
Mouth watering discounts and freebies from June 15 - 24 at Specialty Stores and Food & Beverage outlets.
*See posters and banners for details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-0506, Series of 2007

Not Just for the Big Boys 2 Car Exhibit!
Drool over those nice toys for the big boys from June 14 - 17.

Men Who Matter Photo Exhibit!
Find out the men who matter the most from June 14 - 25.

Father's Day Special Presentation!
Groove to the music of the AREA 1 band on June 16, 7 pm at the Grand Atrium, Level 2.

Streetscape Gigs!
Thank God It's Friday! Unwind with DRESS DOWN FRIDAY on June 15 and NTWINE on June 29 at 10 pm.

Shangri-La Plaza
For details, please call 633-7851 loc. 113 / 153
Events subject to change without prior notice

Race to the finish

Where does the soul of Manila lie? At a landmark, a building, or a place? Or is it with a person? Ten passionate teams recently signed up for the Nokia N95 Soul of Manila Wireless Adventure that took them around Manila in the quest to discover the soul of the city using the Nokia N95.

The teams who participated were a merry and competitive mix of personalities, consumers, and members from the media: Digital Tour's Manu Sandejas, Michelle Aguas, Jay Server of Capone's, Jennifer Juco, funny man Tim Tayag, Philippine Star's Kathy Moran, Jaime Daez of Fully Booked, Jane Chua, Maxim's Rovilson Fernandez, Manila Bulletin's Carlo Suerte-Felipe, Breakfast host Patty Laurel, Stephen Ang, Cat Juan, Ed Capulong, bag designer Amina Aranaz-Alunan, Philippine Daily Inquirer's Pam Pastor, stylist Pam Quinones, Glen Flores, Marie Claire fashion editor Rorie Carlos, and HardWare Magazine's Paolo Manzano.

The contestants took pictures, shot videos, recorded music, browsed the web, utilized a GPS device, saved and sent information, and uploaded data using their Nokia N95 to complete their tasks.

And after 2 days of racing all over the city to complete complex challenges and tricky tasks, 1 team emerged victorious. Edilberto C. Capulong and Catarina A. Juan topped 9 other teams by finishing all their tasks in the fastest time and with the highest number of points.

The winners were announced on the culminating event held last Wednesday, May 30 at the Ayala Museum in Makati.

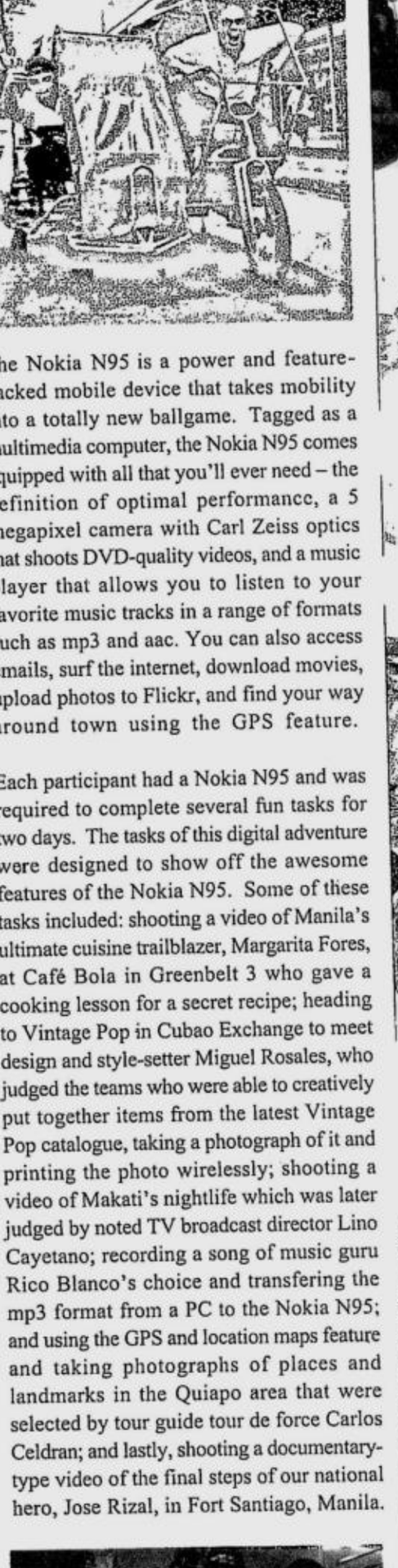
Attending the event were the winners, Ed and Cat, the contestants and marshals, and key people from Nokia like Sandeep Khanna, Grace Del Callar and William Hamilton-Whyte. The fun-filled party was also graced by different celebrities and personalities, plus other invited guests.

The grand prize was given to Ed Capulong and Cat Juan in a special awarding ceremony. They each received P50,000 in cash and an Amanpulo vacation.

2 days of fun and adventure-filled racing all over the metro. 2 winners who ultimately discovered the soul of Manila. 1 multimedia computer that made it all possible – the Nokia N95.

The Nokia N95 is a power and feature-packed mobile device that takes mobility into a totally new ballgame. Tagged as a multimedia computer, the Nokia N95 comes equipped with all that you'll ever need – the definition of optimal performance, a 5 megapixel camera with Carl Zeiss optics that shoots DVD-quality videos, and a music player that allows you to listen to your favorite music tracks in a range of formats such as mp3 and aac. You can also access emails, surf the internet, download movies, upload photos to Flickr, and find your way around town using the GPS feature.

Each participant had a Nokia N95 and was required to complete several fun tasks for two days. The tasks of this digital adventure were designed to show off the awesome features of the Nokia N95. Some of these tasks included: shooting a video of Manila's ultimate cuisine trailblazer, Margarita Fores, at Café Bola in Greenbelt 3 who gave a cooking lesson for a secret recipe; heading to Vintage Pop in Cubao Exchange to meet design and style-setter Miguel Rosales, who judged the teams who were able to creatively put together items from the latest Vintage Pop catalogue, taking a photograph of it and printing the photo wirelessly; shooting a video of Makati's nightlife which was later judged by noted TV broadcast director Lino Cayetano; recording a song of music guru Rico Blanco's choice and transfering the mp3 format from a PC to the Nokia N95; and using the GPS and location maps feature and taking photographs of places and landmarks in the Quiapo area that were selected by tour guide tour de force Carlos Celdran; and lastly, shooting a documentary-type video of the final steps of our national hero, Jose Rizal, in Fort Santiago, Manila.



Congratulations to
Edilberto C. Capulong and Catarina A. Juan
– the winners of The Nokia N95
Soul of Manila Wireless Adventure

Aided only by their Nokia N95, teams underwent 2 days of mad dashes, tricky tasks and complex challenges all over the busy city of Manila.

And when it's all over, Ed Capulong and Cat Juan finished their tasks first and got to discover the city's soul the fastest and emerged victorious in the 1st ever Nokia N95 Wireless Adventure

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FASHION

Mini-me
Christopher Lejeune, with sons Sebastien and Tristan, in a striped hand-woven silk barong with mother-of-pearl and silk embroidery

Father's day finery

By Bianca Consunji
Contributor

Fashion brand Silk Cocoon unveils a new collection of clothes designed especially for the busy breadwinner

FOR MANY BUSY FATHERS, fashion is always an afterthought.

After a long day at work, they head home, change into the first ratty shirt they find in the cabinet, and settle down to enjoy some quality time with their family.

Sometimes, on weekends, they change into loose polo shirts and khakis for a trip to the theme park, or an afternoon at the movies.

Very rarely do fathers get a chance to express themselves, fashion-wise, because of the demands of work and family life.

However, the people behind fashion brand Silk Cocoon disagree. Recently, they came out with a new collection of clothes designed especially for the busy breadwinner.

Staple items such as silk shirts and linen *barongs* are given a twist, thanks to details such as ethnic beads, mother-of-pearl squares, Jaipur-inspired embroidery and tie-dyed accents. Bright, juicy colors such as aqua, yellow and green also give life to the collection.

Thirty-six-year-old entrepreneur Leon Araneta, for instance, prefers comfortable clothes so he can spend time with his kids be-

FATHER'S/ E2

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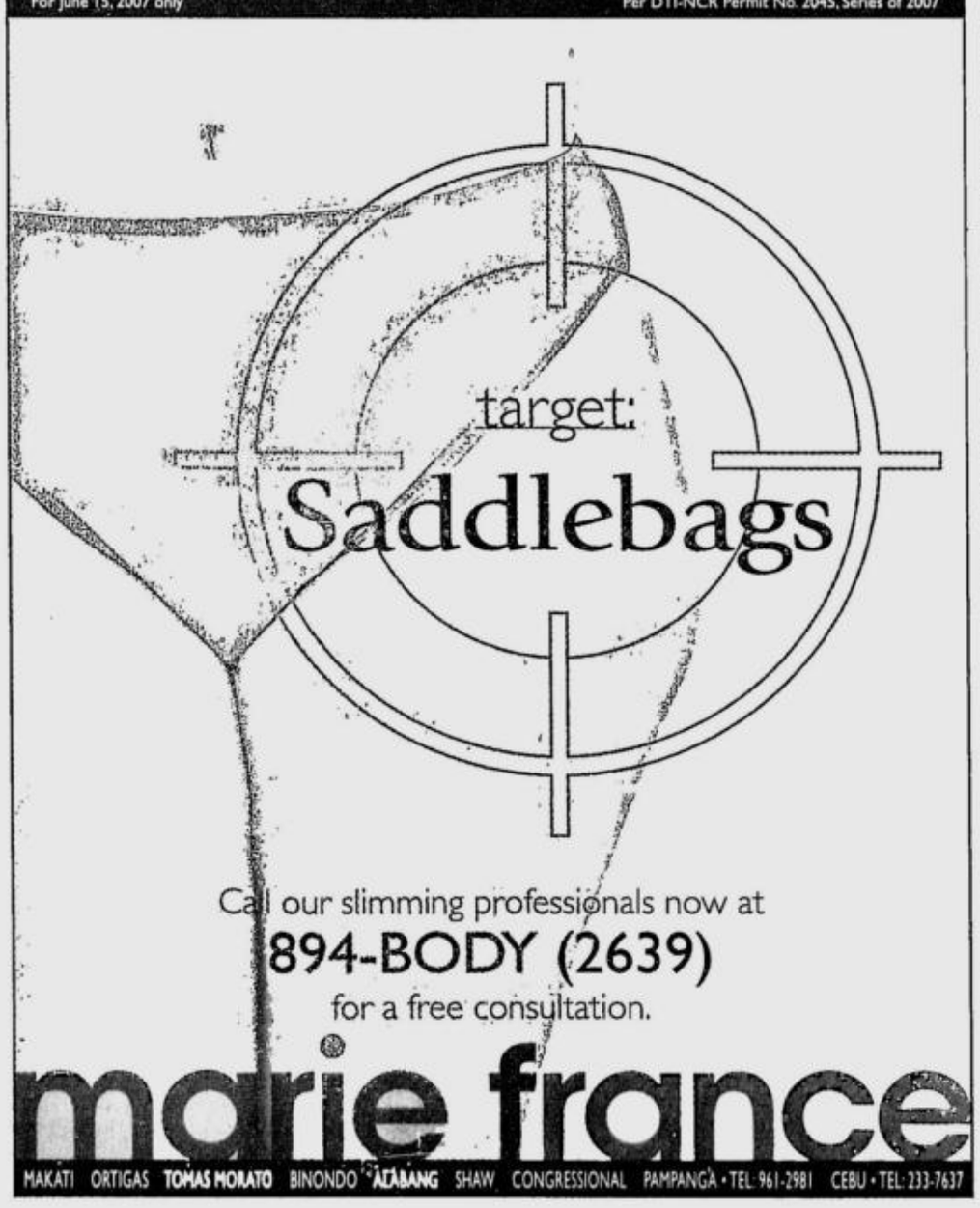

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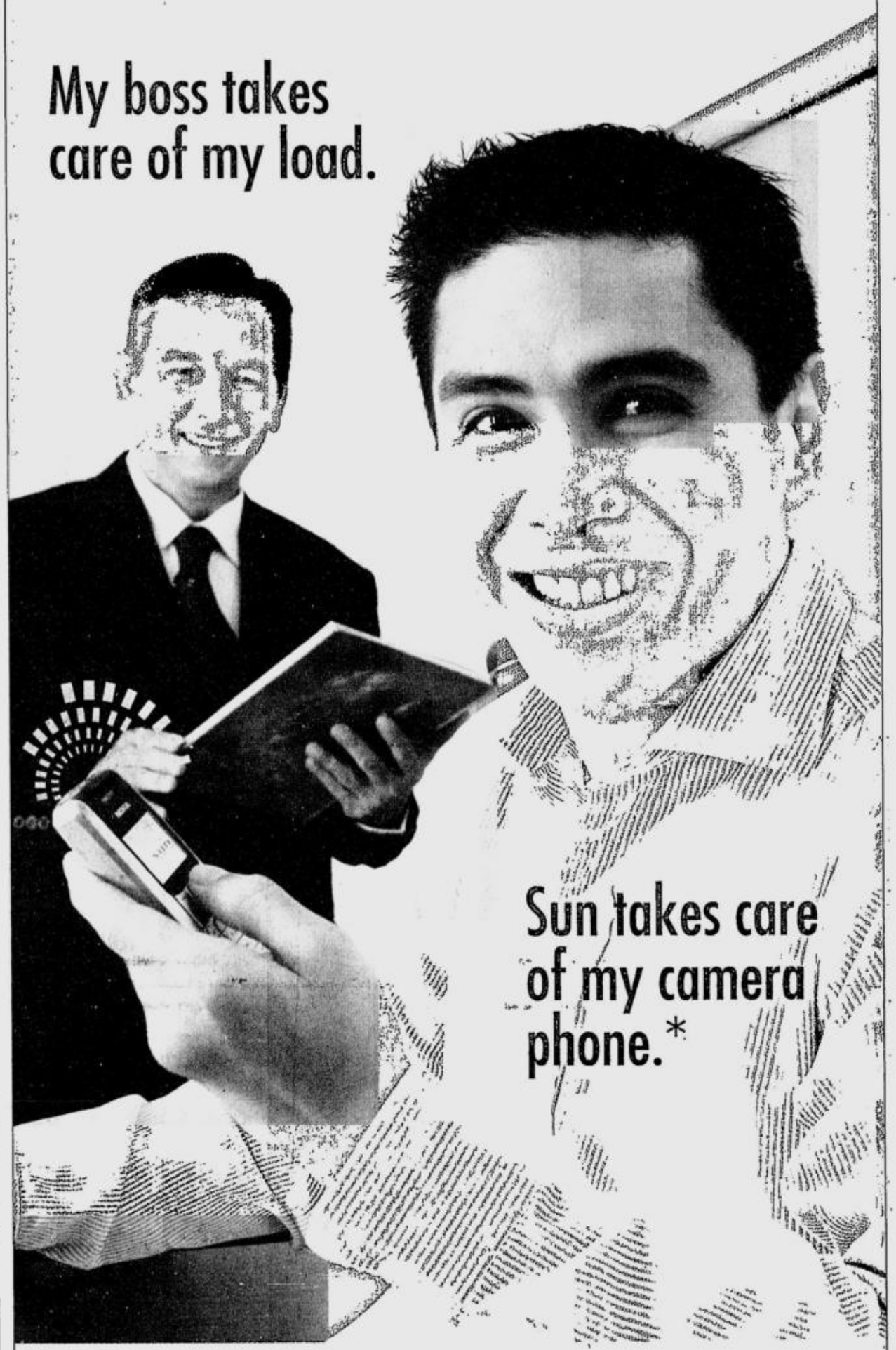

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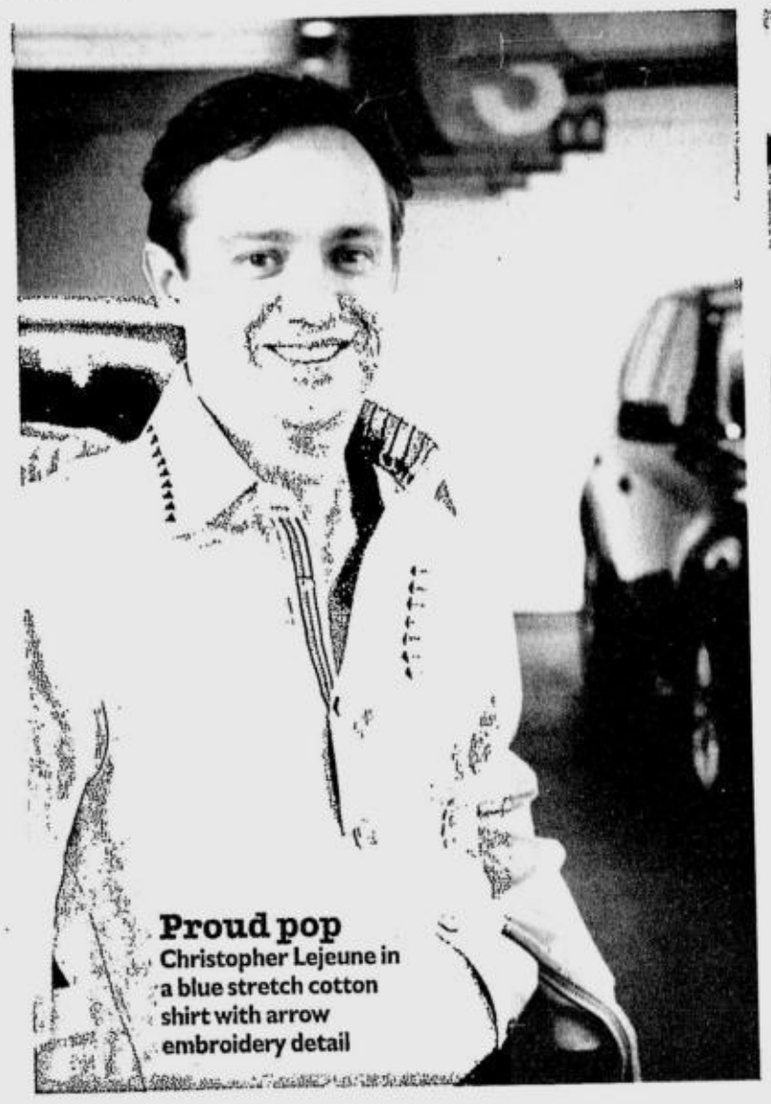


Proud pop
Christopher Lejeune in a blue stretch cotton shirt with arrow embroidery detail

Father knows best
Leon Araneta in an aqua linen shirt with embroidery detail

Daddy cool
Lito German in a blue embroidered silk shirt

Father's day finery

From page E1

fore and after work. Father to a baby girl, Araneta says he's a hands-on dad. "I can't do everything, but I do as much as I can. I change diapers, I read stories, and I feed her. I want my daughter to really feel my presence as she grows up."

Christopher Lejeune, 42, agrees. Father to two boys, he believes that it is important for parents to be around for their children. "We do everything with them," Lejeune says. "We associate ourselves with a lot of things they do. We help them with baths and take them to school."

Lejeune, in particular, enjoys playing soccer and frequent trips to the beach with his boys. "Whenever we can, we take them out and have fun. That way, we'll know more about them, and they'll feel comfortable going to us."

Traveling is also important to 37-year-old Lito German, corporate communications and marketing director of automobile giant BMW and father of three children.

"We travel a lot. I'm pretty busy, but I make sure that it's quality—and not quantity—time that counts. We really plan out our activities."

"For example, Disneyland is no fun for a parent," German says. "But to see the joy on the kids' faces is priceless when they see their favorite cartoon characters."

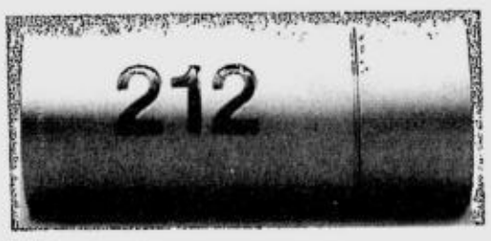
German, who usually wears suits six days a week, looks forward to Sundays when he can relax with his kids in jeans, sneakers and shirts. However, with Silk Cocoon's latest offerings, he no longer has to wait until he's dressed down at the end of the week to feel comfortable in his clothes.

Photography Patrick Martires
Sittings editor Bianca Consunji
Grooming Tatin Yang
using Make Up For Ever cosmetics
All clothes Silk Cocoon
Shot at the BMW show rooms
in Makati and Libis
Special thanks to Lito German

Like father, like sons
Lito German, in a turquoise linen shirt with cutout squares, strikes a pose with sons Sevi and Gio.

Scents for Dad

EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD fragrance and daddies are definitely no exception. Spraying on a good scent is a perfect mood lifter. Stripped of their many protective layers, daddies, after all, are just as "scenti-mental" as you and me.



212 Men

212 Men reveals a masculine fragrance that is different, surprising, and exceptionally attractive. It is made for men who are unapologetically cosmopolitan, urban, innovative and trendy.

A woody transparent musk, the fragrance has leafy top notes of Citrus leaves, cut grass, and Spice leaves; spicy floral middle notes from Green pepper, Ginger, and Gardenia petals; and a woody musk base of Sandalwood, Incense and White musk.

Available in 100 ml (P3,850) and 50 ml (P2,750) at leading department stores nationwide. 212 Men by Carolina Herrera is exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corporation.

Escada Sentiment Pour Homme

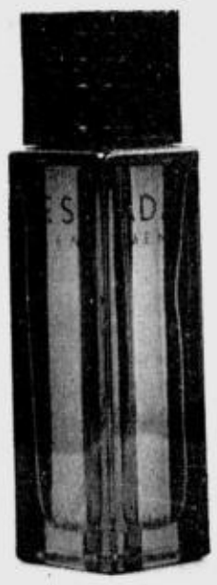
Escada Sentiment Pour Homme is a masculine but very gentle fragrance for the modern, elegant man. Inside the heart-shaped bottle is a sweet, spicy and woodsy combination of citrus notes, fragrant spices and sensual wood.

Available in 100 ml (P4,100), 50 ml (P3,150) and 30 ml (P2,150) at leading department stores nationwide. Escada Sentiment Pour Homme is exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corporation.

Herrera Aqua

Carolina Herrera introduces Herrera Aqua, a new fragrance for men inspired by nature. Herrera Aqua is an Eau de Toilette that combines freshness, elegance, and masculinity. The fragrance combines the citrus water freshness of frosted Bergamot, Mandarin zest, Fig and Bamboo leaves with Green spicy aromatic essences from Neroli, French Lavender, Rosemary, Cardamom, and White pepper, and the tempering character of woody Amber musk notes from Vetiver, Tonka beans, Amber, and smooth skin musk.

Available in 100 ml (P3,600), 50 ml (P2,500) at leading department stores nationwide. Escada Sentiment Pour Homme is exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corporation.



Boss Selection

If you're a man who wants to leave an indelible mark or impression on the people you meet, then the new Boss Selection will suit you perfectly. It's a fragrance that speaks of success, sophistication and elegance.

Its sensual scent is highlighted by top notes of grapefruit and mandarin combined with spicy pink peppercorn with a solid base of cedar leaf, cedar wood, patchouli, vetiver and musk.

A Boss Selection man is an achiever, someone who takes pride in who he is and what he does. Actor Thomas Kretschmann, who made an impression with his brief role as a compassionate German general in "The Pianist," is the face of Boss Selection.

Boss Selection is available at all leading department stores nationwide and is exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corporation (90-ml spray P4,450; 50-ml spray P3,450).

RBlackXS by Paco Rabanne

BlackXS by Paco Rabanne is a unique fragrance that plays on contrasts with incisive new notes and modern harmonies.

BlackXS is inspired by rock 'n roll, a world ruled by rebels with gentle spirits. The scent is uninhibited and instinctive. Exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corporation in leading department stores nationwide (100-ml spray, P3,600; 50-ml spray, P2,500).

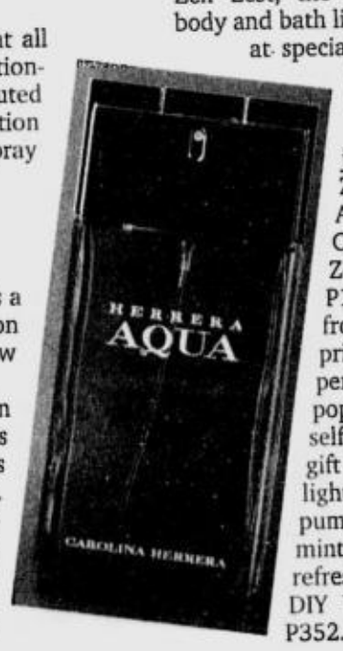
Fresh Attitude by Givenchy

The successful franchise of Very Irresistible Givenchy introduces Fresh Attitude, a new limited-edition fragrance for men embodying masculine irresistibility in a woody, fresh, aromatic scent.

With top notes of peppermint and grapefruit, the fragrance gives off a sensation of freshness, energy and dynamism. Its light blue juice and luminous bottle in graduating shades of blue further convey the fragrance's masculine freshness. Exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corporation, Givenchy's Fresh Attitude is available in all leading department stores nationwide in EDT Spray 50 ml at 2,650 and EDT Spray 100 ml at 3,500.

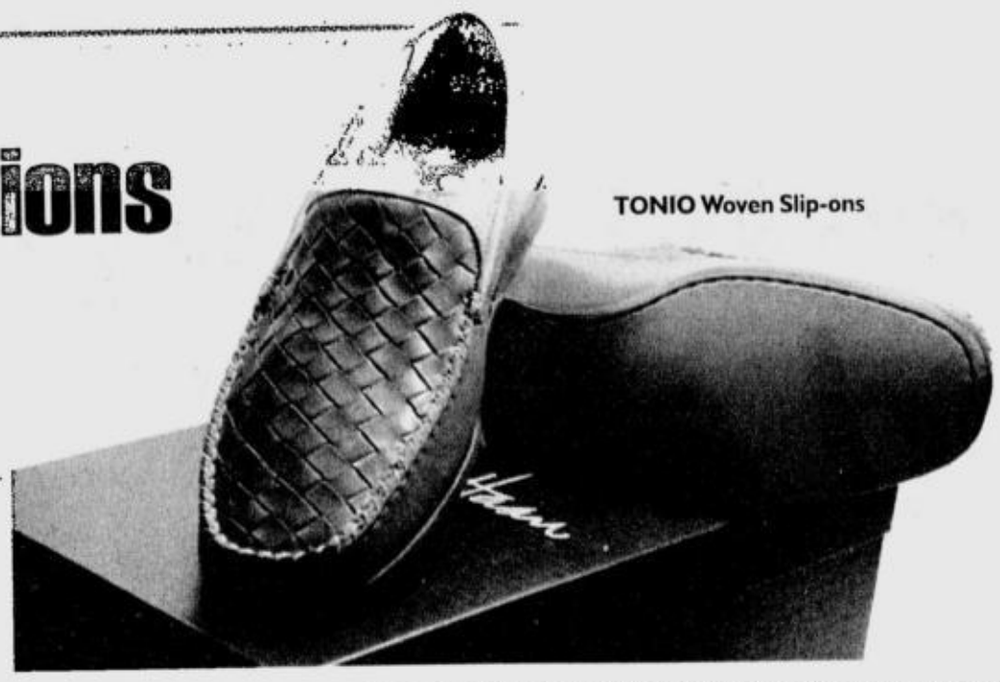
Zen Zest treats

This Father's Day, treat Dad to something special with a selection of top-quality fragrance and foot care products. Until June 17, Zen Zest, the Philippines' premier-quality body and bath line, offers first-class products at special discounted prices guaranteed to put a smile on Dad's face.



Dads everywhere will enjoy the fresh, clean scent of Zen Zest men's colognes Aquamarine, Bullet, and Celadon. Each 50-ml bottle of Zen Zest men's colognes are for P152, a 20-percent discount from its usual standard retail price of P190. You can also pamper Dad's feet with Zen Zest's popular foot spa, the Do-It-Yourself Wooden Gift Set. This great gift for Father's Day features a delightful peppermint scrub, natural pumice stone, and perky peppermint lotion, leaving Dad's feet truly refreshed. For Father's Day, each DIY Wooden Gift Set retails for P352.

Sole sensations



TONIO Woven Slip-ons

BI-FOLD leather picture frame

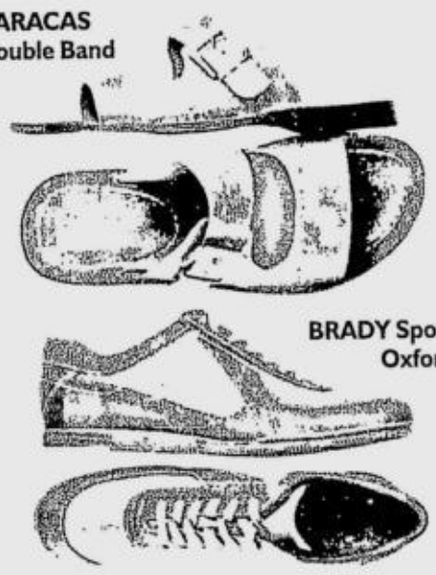
TIRED OF GIVING DAD necktie after necktie every time Father's Day rolls around? Bored with the idea of buying yet another golf club, stationery set and dress shirt for dad this year? Give him a gift he will truly appreciate—a brand-new pair of shoes from America's premier luxury brand, Cole Haan.

As a special Father's Day treat, Cole Haan is giving away a bi-fold leather picture frame for purchases of regular-priced items worth P10,000 and above, from June 11-17, making Cole Haan shoes the perfect gift for Dad on Father's Day.

Whether it's for work, casual everyday wear, dress-up affairs or sporting events, Cole Haan shoes make the perfect Father's Day present. Cole Haan has got every style covered, from Oxfords to slip-ons, to open-toe sandals, and even active footwear reinforced with Nike Air Technology. With the Cole Haan trademark of fine craftsmanship achieved through timeless design, Cole Haan shoes are definitely every dad's dream.

These classic styles come in exquisite materials such as soft leather and suede, burnished Italian calfskin, distressed leather, smooth leather, woven deerskin and canvas. The shoes come in easy-to-match neutral colors such as milkshake, tan, chocolate, brandy, dark brown, French roast and black, and are finished with elegant details such as artisan stitch-out and contrast stitching.

CARACAS Double Band



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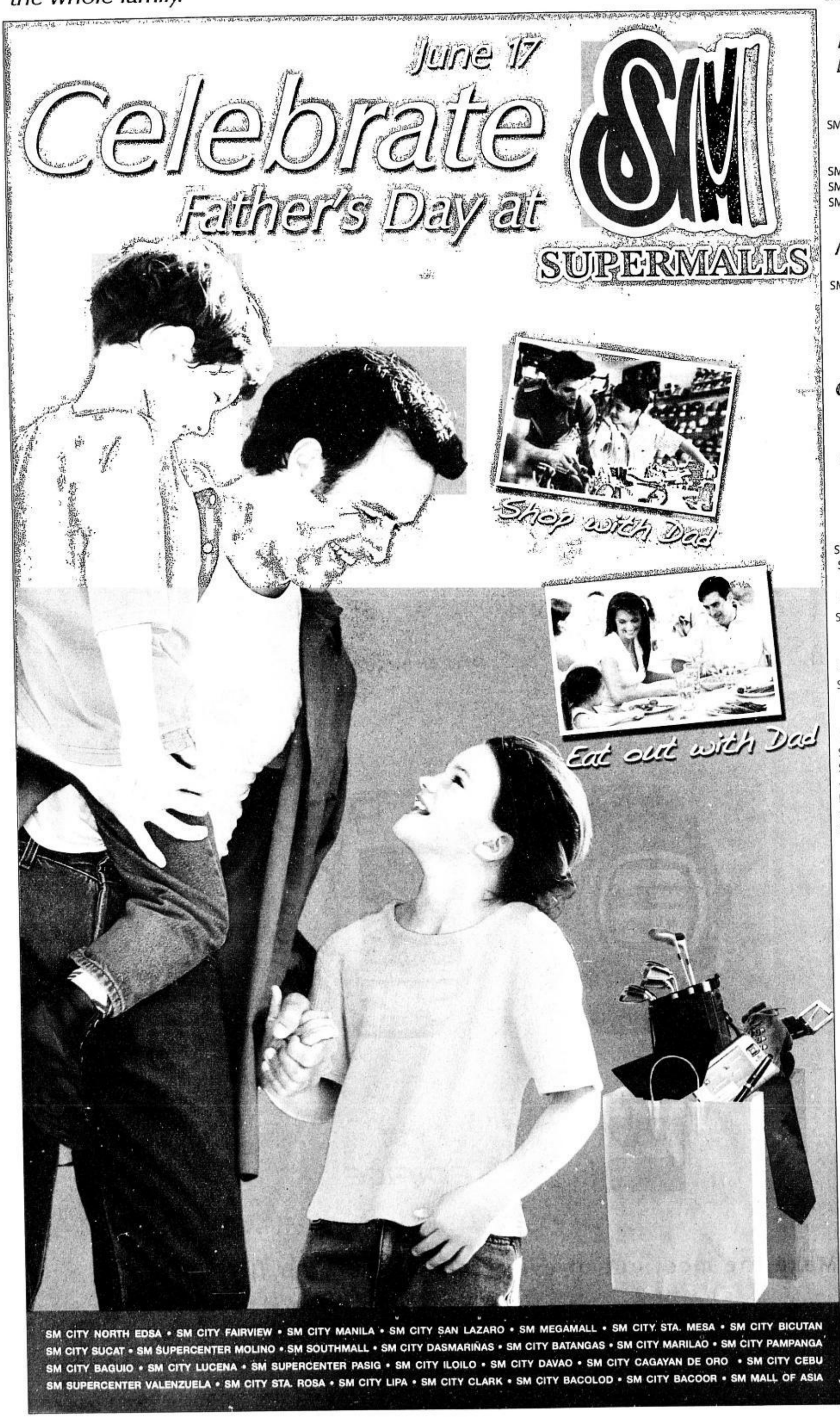

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SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA • SM CITY STA. ROSA • SM CITY LIPA • SM CITY CLARK • SM CITY BACOLOD • SM CITY BACOOR • SM MALL OF ASIA

Special Moments with Dad Photo Contest
by Photoline, Picture City, Great Image & Kameraworld

June 1 - 30
SM City North Edsa, SM City Fairview, SM City Manila, SM Supercenter Valenzuela, SM City Sta. Mesa, SM City San Lazaro, SM Megamall, SM Mall of Asia, SM Supercenter Pasig, SM City Sucat SM City Bicutan, SM Southmall, SM City Bacoor

Dads Fashion Show and Makeover

June 15
SM City Manila, SM City Dasmariñas SM City Fairview
June 16
SM Southmall, SM City Pampanga, SM City Cebu SM City Iloilo, SM City Batangas, SM City Sucat SM City Marilao, SM Supercenter Valenzuela
June 17
SM City Bicutan, SM City Lipa, SM City Bacolod SM City Davao, SM Supercenter Molino SM City Lucena, SM City Cagayan de Oro SM City Sta. Mesa

Father and Child Pizza Eating/Making Contest
by Pizza Hut

June 16
SM City Marilao, SM City Lipa, SM City Bacolod SM City Davao, SM City Cagayan de Oro
June 17
SM City Baguio, SM City Dasmariñas SM City Clark, SM City Iloilo, SM City Cebu SM City Pampanga, SM Supercenter Molino SM City Lucena

Musical Tribute to Dads

June 16
SM City Bacolod, SM City Cagayan de Oro SM City Davao
June 17
SM City Cebu, SM City Iloilo

Father & Child Singing Contests and Talent Shows

June 15
SM City Lipa, SM City Batangas
June 17
SM City Cagayan de Oro, SM City Baguio

RC Car Racing
by Tamiya c/o LiL's Hobby Shop

SM Megamall (June 16), SM Mall of Asia (June 17) SM Southmall (June 23), SM City Sucat (June 30)

PLDT Libreng Tawag Kay Itay

SM City Sta Mesa (June 15), SM City Bacoor (June 16), SM Southmall (June 17)

Level-Up! Gaming with Dad

SM City Sta. Mesa (June 15), SM City Bacoor (June 16), SM Southmall (June 17)

Concerts and Mall Tours

SM City Clark (Janno Gibbs - June 16) SM Supercenter Valenzuela (Mark Bautista - June 17), SM City Lipa (Rachelle Ann Go back-to-back with Jimmy Marquez - June 17) SM City Batangas (The Dawn - June 17) SM City Sta. Rosa (Jed Madela - June 17) SM City Dasmariñas (Auriette - June 17)

Ace Hardware Gadgets and Tools Fair

SM City Bicutan (June 15), SM Supercenter Valenzuela (June 15), SM City Manila (June 15-17), SM City Sucat (June 16-17) SM City Fairview (June 17), SM Megamall (June 17)

Other Events

SM City Clark
Father and Kid Endurance Challenge (June 15 &17)
Dad's Big Weekend (June 15-17)
Dance Revo Competition(June 16-17)
SM Supercenter Molino
Singing Daddy Videoke Challenge (June 16)
SM City Dasmariñas
Singing Daddy Videoke Challenge (June 17)
SM City Marilao
Father & Child Grand Slam Shootout (June 17)
SM City Lucena
Dad's Craze : Techno Fair and Living Gallery (June 15-17)
TRC : "Negosyo 2 Go" (June 16)
Awarding of Superdads (June 17)
SM City Sta. Rosa
Kiddie Fun Day with Dad (June 17)

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LIFESTYLE

BROWN sheath with ruffles

DESIGNER Romyda Keth in her atelier

Phnom Penh: From war to chic-ness

LIFE-STYLED
Thelma Sioson San Juan

Noted Cambodian designer to launch collection in Manila

I'M THE ONLY one left. My whole family killed, my sisters and parents," the hotel driver said as we came up the driveway of Raffles Hotel Le Royal in Phnom Penh.

It was an odd way to break the ice, but

NOTED/ F3

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BICUTAN • LUCENA • BAGUIO • MARILAO • DASMARINAS • BATANGAS • DELGADO • SAN LAZARO • SUCAT • STA. ROSA • CLARK • MALL OF ASIA • LIPA • BACOLOD

YASMIN Baumann finds a perfect pair in Skechers Somethin Else.

"WAZZUP'S" Eri Neeman

SKECHERS Street Style 2006 winner Jerica Reyes

MODEL Carl San Pedro

MIKA Lagdameo loves her white Skechers sneakers.

BRAZILIAN model Jefferson Duarte

SULTRY model Kit Barraquias

These shoes are made for walking in style

LILA Almario

MYRNA Fernandez, Rowena Tomeldan and AC Ocampo

ARNEL Papa and Ana Rocha

LIZA Ilarde and Gaita Fores

JOSEPHINE Knoxx and Fortune Ledesma

EYE-CATCHING southern belles: Luciene Sol, Thea Lacson, Pinky Mirano, Anna and Me-Ann Chua

BACOLOD'S world traveler Edouard Garcia

ALVARO del Rosario

MAITE Elorde

SHOES AND WATCHES ARE irresistible to me, dahlings, so, without batting an eyelash, *moi* dashed to the opening of one of the hottest brands in town, Skechers, *palanggas*.

Global youth icon Skechers opened its first ever concept store at level M2 of Trinoma, the super regional shopping center on North Avenue in Quezon City, *palanggas*.

By the time *moi* got there, hotshots in business, entertainment and fashion were already there for the grand opening, *palanggas*.

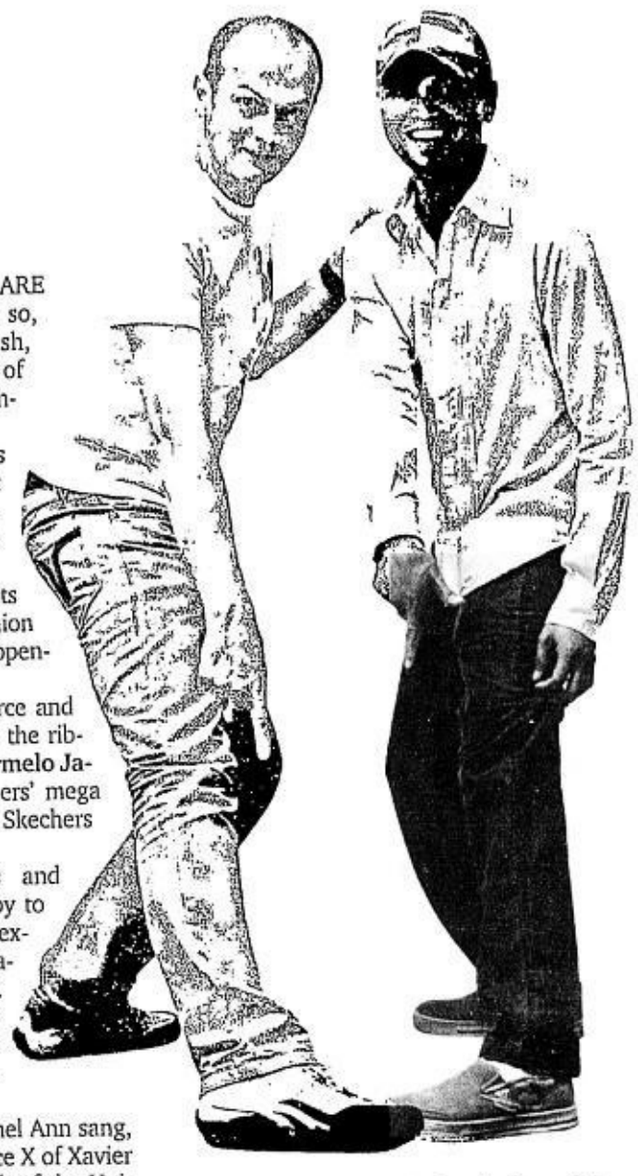
Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry president **Samie Lim** did the ribbon-snipping with Ayala Malls' **Carmelo Jalandoni** and **Marlo Sotto**, Skechers' mega honchos, and popular singer and Skechers gal **Rachel Ann Go**.

Beauty queens **Lian Ramos** and **Mafae Yunon-Belasco** were happy to find that Skechers also carried an exclusive collection from Kitson, a favorite of hot Hollywood celebrities.

"Now, you don't have to go to LA to have the latest shoes that Hollywood's stylish set is wearing," said Lian R.

Après the ribbon-snipping, Rachel Ann sang, MYMP played their hits, and Dance X of Xavier High School and Streetdance Club of the University of the Philippines-Diliman showed off the awesome street-dancing skills that made them winners of Skechers' Streetdance Battle 2, *palanggas*.

Check out Skechers, *palanggas*!


BELGIAN lensman Frank Hoefsmit and PR guy Chris Cahilig

BEAUTY queen Lian Ramos with actor and commercial model Boom Labrusca

Sneak peek

Lila Almario, the talented granddaughter of the founder of the famous Gregg Shoes, is one of today's highly respected designers in the Philippine fashion industry. She designs bags and shoes and exports them to several countries abroad, *palanggas*.

An exhibit at the Greenbelt 3 lobby gave a preview of pieces that we ought to look out for when the stand-alone boutique of Lila A. opens simultaneously with the grand opening of Greenbelt 5.

It is interesting to note, *palanggas*, that Lila's inspiration behind her designs is the customer. "I really look into the changing lifestyles of the Filipino shopper. This is why you'll notice that my collection is rather eclectic. [I don't] create pieces with one centralized or common theme," she told us.

Lila's shoes sell for P2,500-P5,000. That's a bargain, *palanggas*, for designer pieces.

French artist **Moise** kept us entertained as we moved around looking at Lila's beautiful collection, *palanggas*.

"With this new destination at the Ayala Malls, Filipino ingenuity now has a sanctuary at Greenbelt 5 as it houses the best of talents in the country alongside international luxury brands... making Greenbelt 5 and Filipino designers at par with the best of the world," said Ayala Center GM **Myrna Fernandez**.

Blast from the past

It was flashback time, *palanggas*, time to remember those grand, elegant Kahirup balls of Negrense sugar barons and baronesses.

This fabulous tradition was reincarnated during the National Arts Fair in Bacolod City in a colorful event called "Maghirupay Kita." It had all the trimmings of past gorgeous Kahirup balls, *palanggas*, as it gathered the creamiest of Bacolod society, dazzling in their finest jewelry, ternos and barongs—minus, *naturellement*, the "elitism" it once evoked.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

That evening, *palanggas*, the true class and style of this cultural tradition was relived, all for the benefit of the Negros Museum and Negros Occidental Youth Orchestra, two *tres* important charity events.

Popular Negros Occidental Gov. **Joseph G. Maranon** led the opening ceremonies by striking three gongs signaling to the chi-chi invitees to enter the Social Hall of the pillared Provincial Capitol. Mr. Charmer himself, **José Mari Chan**, and classy **Lyn Gamboa**, gorgeous chair and president of NCF, respectively, welcomed everyone to an awesome magical night hosted by dashing **Cito Beltran**.

There was a short fashion show with some of the prettiest young misses of Bacolod parading in Kahirup-inspired gowns created by some of the country's top designers, no less, dahlings.

The grand highlight of the dazzling three-day happening was the fabulous concert the following evening, *palanggas*, of handsome Romanian violinist **Alexandru Tomescu** that earned him five standing ovations.

The Kabayao *famille*, led by talented **Gilopez Kabayao** and wife **Corazon Pineda**, gave a stellar performance. Art exhibits were held in various galleries during the National Arts Fair, *palanggas*.

Francophones

During the International Day of the Francophony, *palanggas*, 200 million French speakers in the world celebrated their common language and commemorated the establishment of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) in 1970 in Niamey (Niger).

"The OIF is an international organization of countries and governments where French is spoken. It is another important forum for discussions of worldwide cultural and linguistic diversity, with headquarters located in Paris," explained my *tres charmante amie* **Carolle Lucas**, top asset of the French Embassy, dahlings.

Alliance Française de Manille, together with the embassies of France, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Egypt, Lebanon and Switzerland, held the Printemps des Poètes. An annual poetry event, theme of this year's Printemps was "Lettera Amorosa." It called on poets to sing love in different languages.

Guest poets included National Artist for Literature **Virgilio Almario** (aka Rio Alma), **Virginia Moreno**, **Krip Yuson** and the *tres charmant* French ambassador **Gérard Chesnel** who recited two poems by French poet **Pierre Corneille** about an old man courting a young lady that brought loud applause from the intellectual invitees, *palanggas*.

Vive la langue Française, mes cheris.

AUSTRIAN Commercial Counselor Walter Holfe with Francisco Ortigas III and Bernard Regnauld-Fabre

BELGIAN Ambassador Gregoire Vardakis, Camille Vincent, Nadine Hamard and son, Ecole Française de Manille principal Mireille Vincent, and Jacques Jeannaud

BELLES of Bacolod's "Maghirupay Kita" gala "Kahirup Night": Mae Villanueva, Mara Pardo de Tavera, Lyn Gamboa and Roni Tapia-Merk

ALICE San Juan, Wally Trinidad and Jean Menguito

NING Chesnel, French Press Attache Carolle Lucas, Martine Vardakis and French Ambassador Gerard Chesnel

Noted Cambodian . . .

From page F1

what initially comes to mind among first-time visitors to Cambodia, like we were, is "The Killing Fields"—the movie and the recent history of this Southeast Asian neighbor. We asked our driver if he was around during the civil war in the '70s and the ignominious **Pol Pot** regime which saw about three million people killed.

He was 13 years old then, he said. We would later learn that his fate was fairly common among residents of Phnom Penh. People lost families to the genocidal regime that wiped out a quarter of the population, mostly of the educated class.

Yet Cambodia today is not a sad place; far from it. While it's not as bustling as Metro Manila—not yet—it is experiencing an economic boom. Former Budget Secretary **Ben Diokno**, whom we ran into at the Raffles (he was in Cambodia on a consulting job), said Cambodia is the fastest growing economy in the region.

"On the fast track" is how World Bank describes the Cambodian economy, fueled as it is by garment exports, tourism and agricultural production. Its garment industry is apparently surviving the China onslaught.

This brings us to why we were in Phnom Penh in the first place—to look into the fashion collection of Paris-trained Cambodian designer **Romyda Keth.** (A few Cambodian designers are making inroads in New York.) Apart from her beautiful atelier/store in Phnom Penh, Keth already has stores called Ambre in Tokyo (Roponggi), London, Paris, Ho Chi Minh and in a high-end resort in Africa.

Keth's atelier in a leafy neighborhood in Phnom Penh is a lovely two-story colonial house she turned into a showroom. The beauty of Phnom Penh is that, like Ho Chi Minh, it has a few houses and government buildings that survive from the country's French colonial years. They're like isolated pieces of old Europe transported to the here and now, coexisting—although not fully blending—with aging shophouses, new fancy buildings with bright blue glass windows purveying hybrid architecture, and well-paved roads (Phnom Penh has a better road network than Metro Manila) that have equal numbers of motorbikes and cars.

On a hot summer day, Phnom Penh neighborhoods can be pretty laidback. It was to this comfort zone that Keth returned as a wife and mother after growing up in Paris.

Born to diplomat parents (her mother is Cambodia's ambassador to Beijing and her father is the ambassador to Unesco), she and her family left Cambodia when she was only seven. After years in Prague, they moved to Paris in the early '70s. There she went to the Paris School of Fine Arts and, later, to the Esmod School of Fashion Design.

After only two years at Esmod, she accepted a designing job at Macy's. Not long after this, she began showing her own collections in a small boutique in Paris and developing a good clientele, including actress **Carole Bouquet**, the former wife of French actor **Gerard Depardieu.**

In 1994, her husband, a biologist, prodded her to return to and live in Cambodia. The couple and their four children (now aged 18 to 5) resettled in Phnom Penh where Keth took some time to adjust. She continued exporting her clothes to her Paris clientele, but before long, she discovered the native home industries of embroidery and silk weaving. Cambodian silk and embroidery then became the defining elements of her design.

Keth's designs are chic, as chic as her atelier. They're not costumes. They're contemporary, and a few, such as her winter coats with fabric-strip borders, offer cutting-edge designs. It's obvious she speaks through fabrics and colors, the way she does in her shop.

Tantalizing colors

Her atelier has graceful wrought-iron windows, a fluid stairway, and rooms in colors that are so bold they put you in various moods as you move from one to the other. Her colors stimulate, like spices. For instance, her black clothes are in a fuchsia room. On the second floor, the black and grey clothes are in a purple room. Another room is painted in shades of purple to serve as backdrop for red-to-hot pink clothes.

Like the walls of her atelier, her clothes follow a stimulating palette—from blacks and greys, to purple and lilac, to saffron and fuchsias and pinks. These are tantalizing colors to any woman.

Her silhouettes are trendy but wearable—lots of bubble skirts or flare, pencil skirts or dress coats. She uses appliqués (perfect on those colorful geometrics), embroidery, judicious beadwork, fabric strips.

Her clear advantage over Filipino designers is her access to fabrics: Cambodian silks, organza, and Korean cotton and other fabric blends.

She loves mixing colors and fabrics. "Today's women are so busy in their careers and with their children that they forget to be glamorous, to be women, to be pretty," Keth told us.

She designs mini collections every week—a clear indication of a growing clientele in Phnom Penh, composed mostly of expatriates and a growing middle class. This should easily draw the envy of Manila designers.

Another enviable thing about Cambodian fashion is the existence of weaving villages. Our car crossed the Mekong River by ferry boat to reach Koh Daich, a village of weavers. There we saw women hunched before their looms, weaving silk in jewel colors—fuchsia and pink in one house, lilac in another, aqua in still another.

Ramon Bilbao snapped up the fabrics and wanted to bring home those huge concrete jars (septic tanks, it turned out) if only he could.

AQUAMARINE jacket by Keth

Hiraya Gallery's **Didi Dee** arranged our trip on the invitation of another (ex)gallery owner and businessman, **Michael Adams**, our friend from the Pinaglabanan Gallery years of the '80s. **Michael** and his wife **Janet** are frequent visitors to Phnom Penh, looking into the orphanages there. It was on one of these trips that they walked into Ambre, Keth's store, and loved her clothes.

Michael and Janet will open a store of Keth's collections in Makati and launch it in November this year.

Brumann's tanzanite

Foremost jeweler **Hans Brumann** is working on the exciting gemstone called tanzanite. It was discovered in the foothills of Mt. Kilimanjaro in 1967 and introduced to the world by Tiffany's of New York. A thousand times rarer than diamonds and expected to last for only one generation, tanzanite jewelry make for true heirloom pieces.

Tanzanite's unique color—between blue and violet—is unlike that of any other gemstone. It is a December birthstone.

For Father's Day, Hans Brumann has crafted a pendant cross in lustrous yellow and white gold and *kamagong* wood with one antique shaped tanzanite of 2.78 ct.

JANET Adams (right) and sister Nancy in Keth's little black dresses

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Grand Prize: 73.66cm (29") LG TV & DVD Player
Special Prize: NBS Gift Checks worth ₱500

SurPrize 2!
Discount Coupon for every ₱300 purchase!

Hurry! Promo runs from May 11 to June 30, 2007.
Deadline for submission of entries is on June 30, 2007.
Raffle draw will be on July 16, 2007.

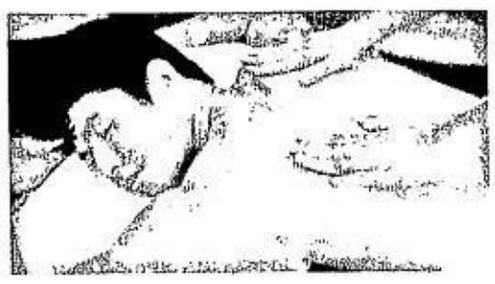
Buy any of the specially marked participating products and get a raffle and discount coupon with every ₱300 single purchase.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No.1524. Series of 2007

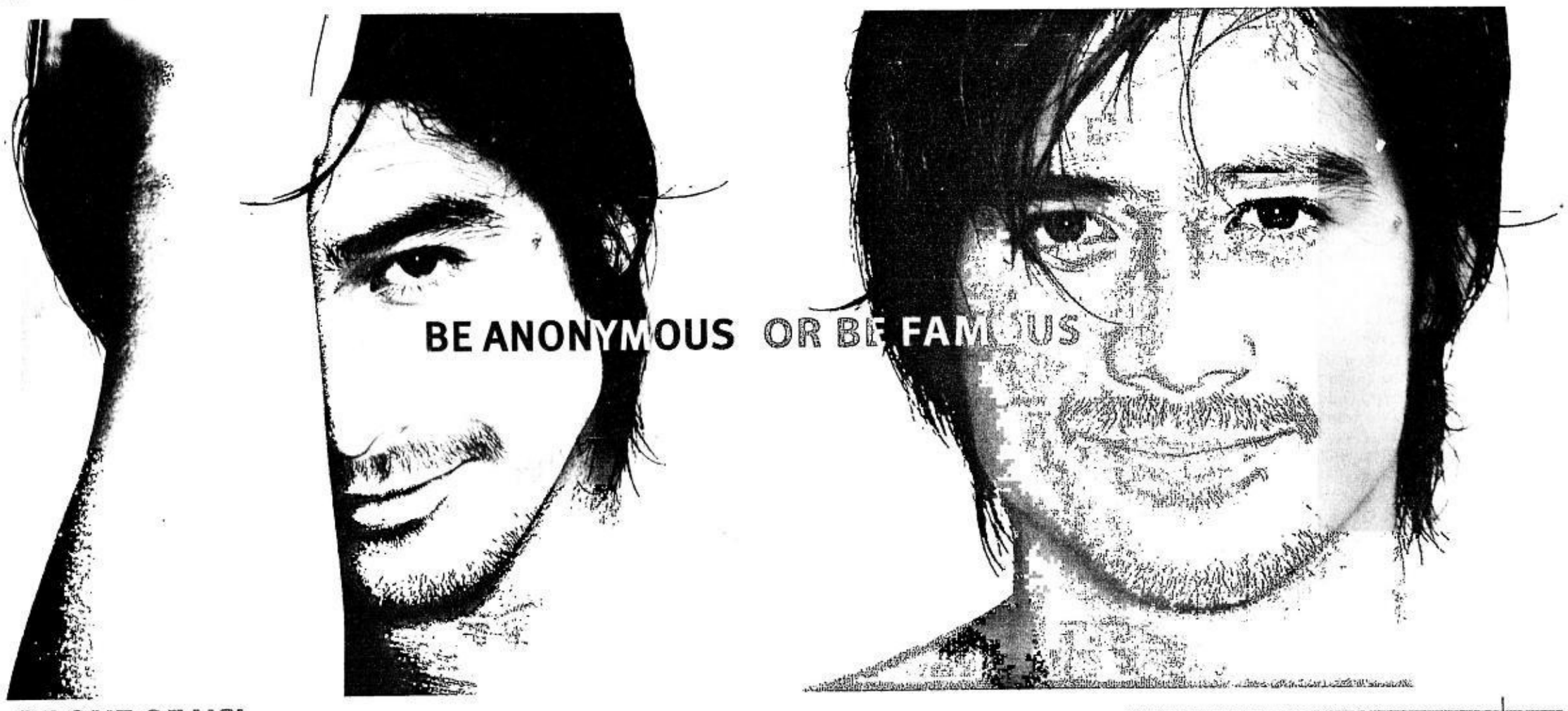
See bookmark flyer for details.

Acryl Ring Notes · advance notebooks · Adventurer Plastic Envelopes · Artline Writing Instruments · Bensia Writing Instruments · BIC Writing Instruments · Campus Mates Notebooks & Binders · Career Notes Notebooks · Corona Notebooks · Croco Tape Tape Adhesives · Crystal Writing Instruments · deli · Dong-A Writing Instruments · Easy to Learn Books · Elit Specialty and Photo Paper · Elmer's Glue · Faber-Castell Art Supplies · Faster Writing Instruments · Green Apple Notebooks · Hallmark · Hi-Tec Tapes & Adhesives · Joy Scissors · King Jim · KW-trio Office Supplies · Leo Notes Notebooks · Crayons & Pencils · Leone · Arts & Crafts · Lotus Writing Instruments · M&G Writing Creativity · maxell CD's & Diskettes · merit · monami · Panda Ballpens · Paper One · Spirit of Wonder · Pentel Writing Instruments · Pilot Writing Instruments · rotring Technical Drawing Instruments · Scotch · Scott Notebooks · Sharp Calculators · Spongebob School Supplies · Spring Leaf Premium Notebooks · Starnotes · Stick-ee Glue · Strathmore Notebooks · Transworld Paper Products · Undo Correction Products · VCO Notebooks · Pad Papers · Zebra Writing Instruments

BEAUTIFUL DAY FOR MEN
It's time the men experience California Nails and Day Spa's menu of services, including a fusion of massage, aromatherapy massage, express facials, men's spa manicure, foot spa, spa pedicure and nail repair treatments. Call 8422754.



A MASSSAGE for dad on his special day



BE ONE OF US!

AUDITION ON:

JUNE 15 / Friday / METRO MANILA at SM MEGAMALL Activity Center
JUNE 16 / Saturday / METRO MANILA at TRINOMA Activity Center
JUNE 22 / Friday / METRO MANILA at ABS-CBN STUDIO

be bench/
The Model Search
A Reality TV Show in search of the new Bench image models & ABS-CBN stars

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AUDITION:
- Filled out application form available at Bench, Herbench, Bench Body and Super bench nationwide with one close up and one full body 3R photos.
- Attached valid receipt from any Bench, Herbench, Bench Body, or Superbench boutique stores with a minimum purchase of P200.00. Valid receipts are from purchases made between May 18-June 22, 2007.
- Original copy and certified photocopy of birth certificate.
- Please wear bench apparel during the audition.

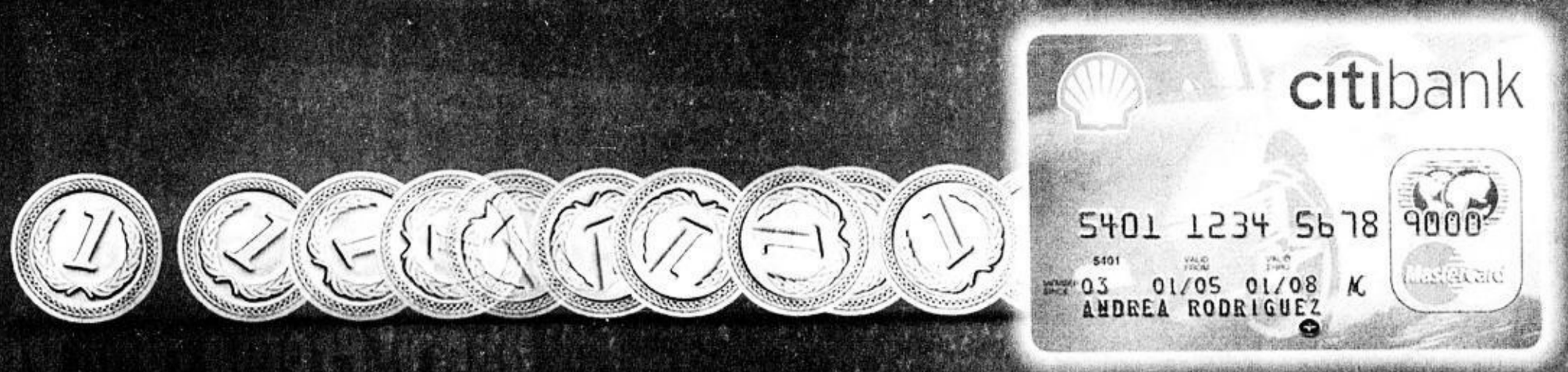
QUALIFICATIONS:
- Single, male or female amateur models
- Between 18 to 25 years old
- Height of at least 5'5" for female 5'7" for male
- Filipino Citizen or of Filipino lineage

Log on to www.benchmodelsearch.com
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2208 series of 2007.

ABS-CBN

citibank

Get a 3% rebate on Shell fuel with a Shell-Citibank MasterCard



free fuel worth P333

Enjoy P333 worth of free fuel when you apply for a Shell-Citibank MasterCard from now until August 15, 2007.

APPLY NOW!
Call 423-3000 or visit www.citibank.com.ph

See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1805, Series of 2007.

Made to move

LIFESTYLE

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle

Text us your feedback:
inquirer life name/age/city/message to
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

KEEP your cool in a Mantaray sleeveless tee (P495) and floral swim shorts (P1,950), also available in green and navy.

Casual wear for stylish men

DEBENHAMS INTRODUCES MANtaray, its newest in-house brand for men. The line offers easy-to-wear, casual clothing of superior quality and feel.

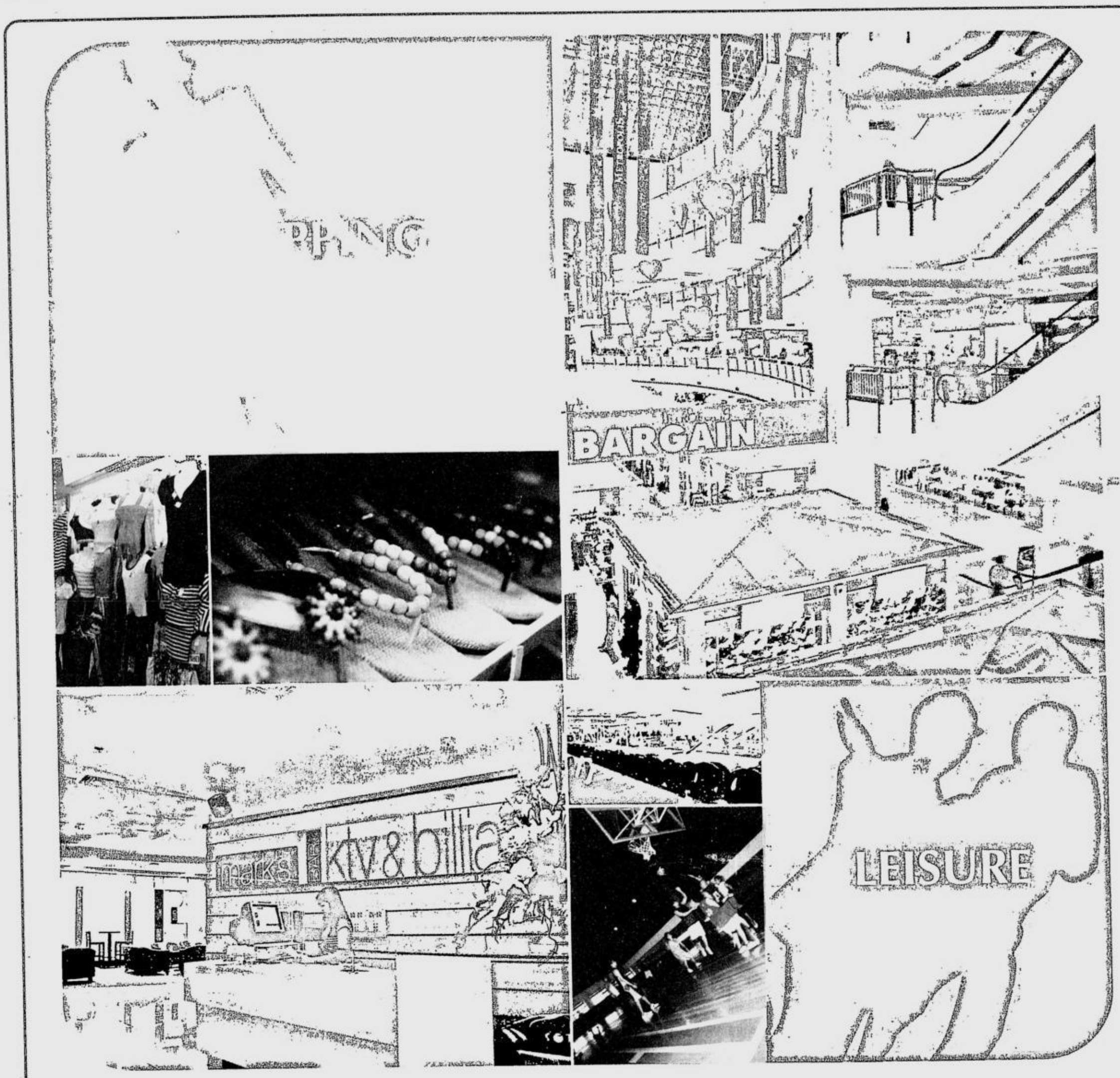
Mantaray is perfect for outgoing guys who enjoy very active lifestyles. Its wide range of swim shorts will suit those who are into water sports, while its comfortable cargo shorts are perfect for casual weekends filled with outdoor activities.

Mantaray's swim and cargo shorts come in a variety of colors and fabrics. Pair these with Mantaray's plain or printed T-shirts or checkered polo tops and you have the perfect leisure getup.

The possibilities are limitless. Garb yourself with comfortable jeans and polo tops to cap off a day spent lounging in the beach. Put on one of Mantaray's wide array of comfy cargo and swim shorts as you prepare to face an action-packed weekend. Enjoy a dinner date amid an outdoor setting dressed in Mantaray's range of basic and printed polo tops made from superior fabrics, which ensure a softer and more comfortable feel.

Visit Debenhams, located at 3/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, and at 3/L, Rustan's Makati. Call 6329802 (Shangri-La) and 8184775 (Rustan's Makati).

KICK off your shoes and unwind in Mantaray's checkered print polo (P1,950) and cargo shorts (P1,750).



METROPOLIS ALABANG star

The **biggest bargain center in the south** is also the only one with the fully equipped recreational facilities of **The Garden Resort**. Whether you're shopping or just looking for a good time, you'll find everything you want at Metropolis!

Metropolis Star Cinema with Dolby Digital Sound · Sports Center · Apartel Residential Units · The biggest terminal hub · FREE Parking

starmall SHAW BLVD
Tel. No. 724-4992

Date	Event	Venue
June 16	Fashion Storm: A Back to School Fashion Show	3/L, Tiangge
June 17	Bayani Agbayani Mall Tour	Activity Area
June 17	Pantomime at the Mall	Finds Entrance (Canopy)
June 23	Scholastic's Reading Carnival with Kiddie Shows	Books for Less
June 24	Scholastic's Reading Carnival with Kiddie Shows	Books for Less
June 24	Stilcwalker	Finds Entrance (Canopy)
June 30	Sabado Boys Mall Tour (Jimmy Bondoc, Paolo Santos, Luke Mejares, Top Suzara, Mike Chan, DJ Mike)	Activity Area
June 30	Shoes and Tops Mix and Match: Rainy Days Tips	3/L, Tiangge

Tuesdays: Comedy Nights at Cuba Libre, 9pm
Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays: Live Band at Cuba Libre, 9pm

starmall NINOY AQUINO
Tel. No. 872-5249

Date	Event	Venue
June 16	Scholastic's Reading Carnival	
June 29	SMB Raffle Draw of 1-2 Punch with Street Party	Open Parking
June 30	2007 Bridal Fashion Show	Activity Hub

Wednesdays: Live Music at The Strip
Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays: Live Band at Cuba Libre
Sundays: Comedy Nights at Cuba Libre

METROPOLIS ALABANG star
Tel. No. 842-2513

Date	Event	Venue
June 16	Andrew E. Album Tour	Activity Area
June 17	2007 Bridal Fashion Show	Home Center
June 17	Modern Shaolin Wushu Athletic	Sports Center
June 17	A Day with Dad	Starland
June 23	Pangkabuhayan Free Workshop	Home Center
June 24	Bayani Agbayani Mall Tour	Activity Area
June 24	Ballet Recital by Dance of Pointes Dance School	Sports Center
June 24	Starland Workshop Rainy Days Showdown	Starland
June 30	Ronin's Carlos Agassi Mall Tour	Activity Area

Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays: Live Band at Mark's Bar

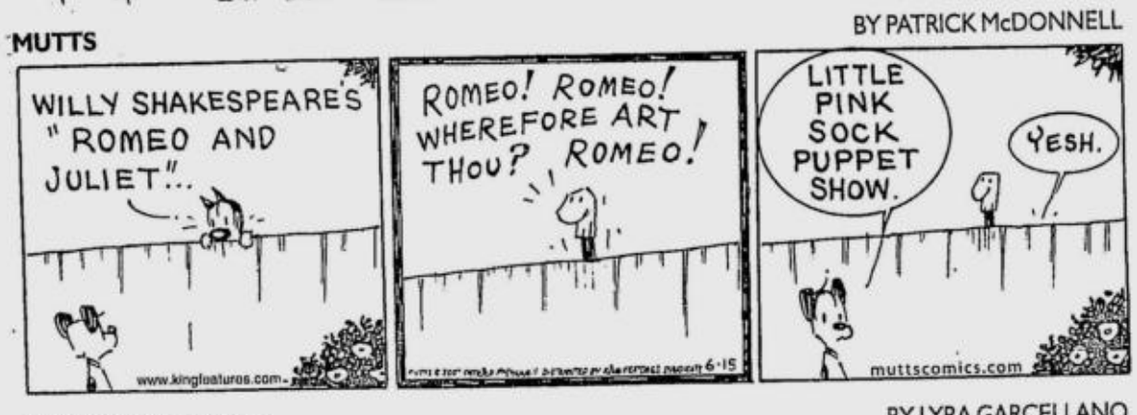
GARFIELD
BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR

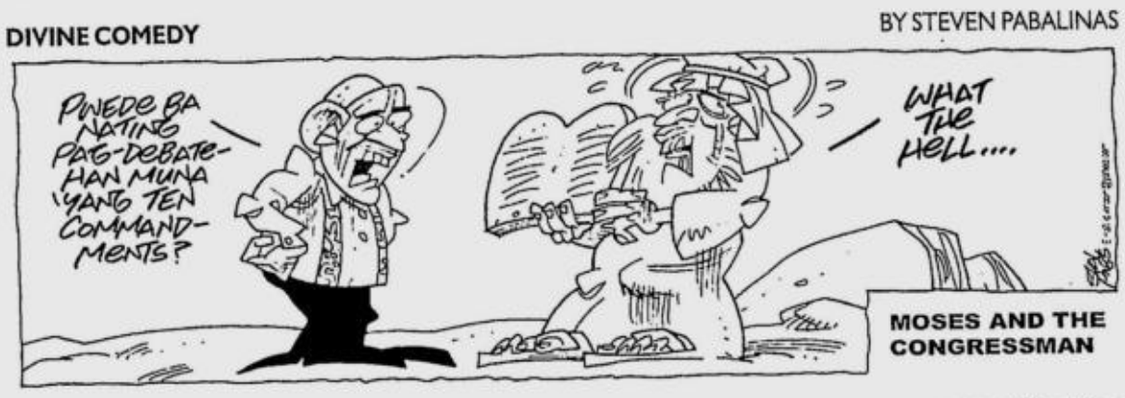
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL



LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

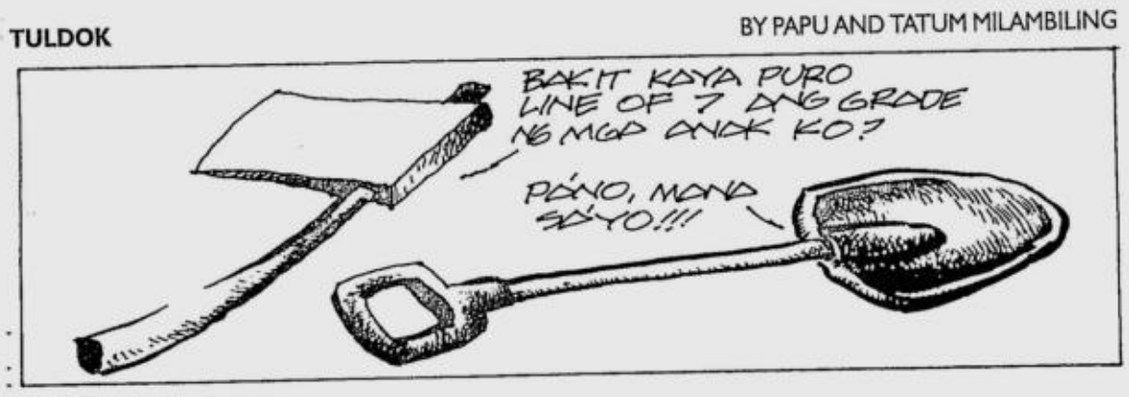


MOSES AND THE CONGRESSMAN

KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA

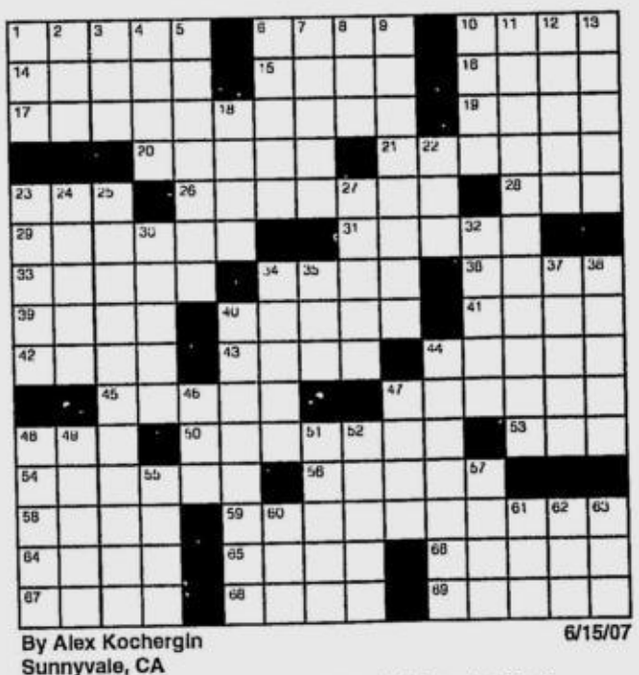
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Woman's wrap
6 Pineapple brand
10 For two, in music
14 Burdened
15 Cooking compartment
16 Open receptacles
17 Citrus shaving
19 Enticement
20 Carpenter, at times
21 Venetian bridge
23 Tack on
26 Elegantly stylish
28 Egyptian viper
29 Unruly mob member
31 Lively old dance
33 Boy with a sling
34 Links' vehicle
36 Composer Khachaturian
39 Lulu
40 Trigonometric functions
41 Whopper
42 Cost per unit
43 Perfect prose
44 Cabinetmaker Duncan
45 Whispered word
47 Negev or Namib
48 Pugilistic poet
50 Chewy candy
53 Notes of scales
54 Esophagus
56 Sudden terror
58 Opera melody
59 Yamoussoukro location
64 Circus enclosure
65 TV control selection
66 Dwight's rival
67 Rim
68 Vocalist James
69 Synthetic fiber

DOWN
1 __-pitch softball
2 Roof sealant
3 Harem area
4 Camera attachment
5 Kept busy
6 Twelve
7 There for all to see
8 "__ Miserables"
9 Beseeches
10 "Dancing Queen" group
11 Religious connection?
12 College credits
13 Bar legally
18 Basin accessory
22 Out of sorts
23 Passion
24 Artemis to Romans
25 Fitting together perfectly
27 Plumed heron
30 Poops out
32 Solemn vows
34 Apple drink
35 Black cuckoo
37 Actress Woodard
38 Convenes
40 Sleep inducer
44 Big-billed bird
46 Frozen water
47 Refuse
48 Playing marble
49 Enticed
51 Nautical direction
52 Atlanta's transit system
55 Like some bloomers
57 Buffalo Bill
60 Animal doc
61 Everybody
62 __ Paulo, Brazil
63 Can material

By Alex Kochergin
Sunnyvale, CA
6/15/07

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

A	D	D		O	C	T	E	T		W	A	L	E	S
R	A	E		R	O	N	D	O		R	I	A	L	S
T	H	E	D	I	C	T	I	O	N	A	R	Y	I	S
		P	E	E	K		E	L	A	P	S	E	D	
T	H	E	O	N	L	Y		S	M	U		R	I	O
A	B	S		T	E	U	T		A	P	P	E	N	D
L	O	T	S	A		C	E	S	T		E	D	G	E
			P	L	A	C	E	T	H	A	T			
M	I	M	E		B	A	N	E		L	E	E	R	Y
T	R	A	C	T	S		A	P	P	L		V	E	E
V	O	X		H	O	N		S	U	C	C	E	S	S
		N	I	G	E	R	I	A		E	L	A	N	
C	O	M	E	S	B	E	F	O	R	E	W	O	R	K
C	R	A	N	E		C	A	R	T	A		U	N	E
C	E	L	T	S		E	R	R	O	R		T	A	G

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6/15/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are attractive and charming. (And you know how to use your charm.) You have a natural sense of psychology; in particular, you know how to apply this skillfully when working with children. You're clever and a very quick learner. You're excellent in business. (You can open, and you can close.) You have a wonderful sense of timing. The year ahead will bring you an interesting choice. Choose wisely.
Birthdate of: Leah Remini, actress; Helen Hunt, actress; Courteney Cox, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Expect family reunions or to see family members you haven't seen for a while. This is also a good time to tackle long-needed repairs at home.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Pay your phone bill. Stay on top of car or truck repairs. Delays, lost items, misplaced things, missed appointments and confused communication dog your steps now.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Old money worries might come back to haunt you. On the other hand, you might have an opportunity to earn money in a way that was missed before

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Today Mercury goes retrograde in your sign. This means you'll be running into ex-partners and people from your past. (Look good! Living well is the best revenge.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You might find yourself dealing with government issues from the past or personal issues that seemed to come back to mind. The next few weeks hold an opportunity to clear up some old business.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Friends from the past or members of groups you belonged to before will pop back into your life now. It's good to have history with others.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Expect to meet old bosses or to run into authority figures or parents you have not talked to for a while. This might be an opportunity to clarify some issues

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is an excellent time to finish schoolwork, wrap up a course you've been taking or finish making travel plans. It's a poor time to initiate things in these areas.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Finalize discussions about shared property. Wrap up loose details concerning insurance matters, debt, inheritances, taxes and wills.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Many of you are dealing with ex-partners and people from your past now. This is an opportunity to gain closure or clarify what was left confused.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): In the next few weeks, you will suffer delays, mixed-up communication, lost paperwork and late checks in the mail at work. Just cope as best you can.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Old flames are back in the picture. This is either fun and exciting or disquieting. (Yikes!) These things are inevitable if you have a life.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

	9			7			5	
	2		9		6		1	
		4		6		2		
			8		7			
		1		3		4		
	7		2		8		3	
	8			1			7	

Difficulty Level ★★★★
6/15

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

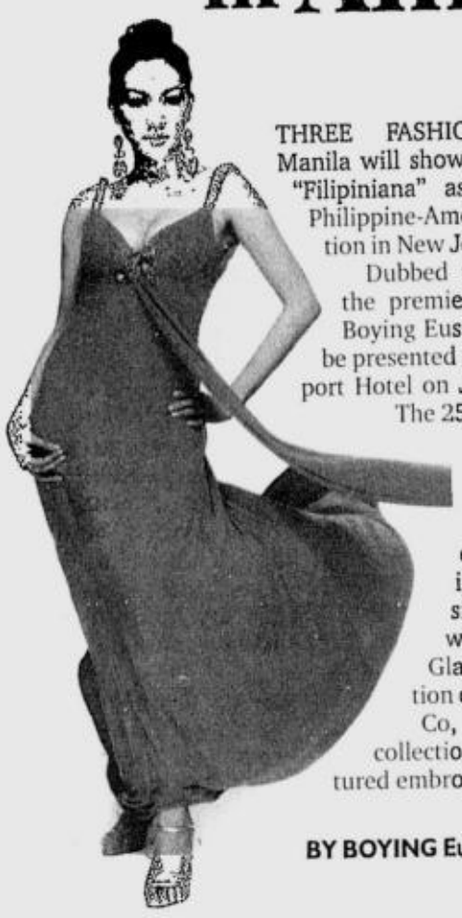
1	5	8	6	9	3	7	2	4
6	2	7	4	5	8	9	3	1
4	9	3	2	7	1	8	6	5
8	1	5	7	2	4	6	9	3
2	3	6	8	1	9	5	4	7
7	4	9	5	3	6	1	8	2
5	6	1	3	8	2	4	7	9
9	8	2	1	4	7	3	5	6
3	7	4	9	6	5	2	1	8

Difficulty Level ★★★
6/15

BY JOEL Pros

BY LEONARD Co

Filipiniana in America



BY BOYING Eustaquio

THREE FASHION DESIGNERS FROM Manila will showcase their modern take on "Filipiniana" as part of the monthlong Philippine-American Friendship Celebration in New Jersey, United States.

Dubbed the Collezione Alta Moda, the premiere collection of Joel Pros, Boying Eustaquio and Leonard Co will be presented at the Sheraton Newark Airport Hotel on June 30, 7 p.m. (US time).

The 25-piece collection of each designer will be a showcase of the finest in Filipino design and craftsmanship.

Pros will present a modern approach to standard Filipiniana dressing with his design mantra of "less is more"; while Eustaquio does Modern Glam Filipiniana with a collection of long and sleek formals.

Co, for his part, will present a collection of richly colored and textured embroidery reminiscent of the heyday of National Artist for Fashion Ramon Valera. Known for his mastery of beadwork patterns and hand-painted pieces, Co's Ultra Modern Filipiniana will be a truly fitting finale to this event.

Organized by the Philippine-American Friendship Committee, Inc., the show hopes to bring to Filipinos residing in the US the richness of local culture through fashion.

DESIGNERS Eustaquio, Co and Pros

SHARP EL506W Scientific
light years ahead

469 functions
Digital Algebraic Logic
Constant/chain calculations
Multi-line playback
Solver function
List calculations
Matrix function
Sturdy, stylish design

469 in 1
awesum!

The SHARP EL506W
so easy to use, you'll almost forget it's a scientific calculator

- 469 functions in 1 calculator
- Digital Algebraic Logic (DAL) allows entry of symbols and numbers of equations as they are written
- Large solid keys with a crisp 2-line display that allows user to check equations and answer at the same time
- Multi Line Playback recalls up to 142 recent steps
- Dual power feature works reliably in all lighting conditions.

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make math fun!

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GOINGS ON

Nonstop texting this school year

AFTER THE SUCCESS OF THE P25 one-day Call and Text Unlimited service, Sun Cellular is launching a new offer that brings load prices at an all-time low: Sun TU 15! This deal offers nonstop Sun-to-Sun texting for 24 hours. And since the service entails the lowest cash outlay of only P15, being connected has never been easier and more affordable. Sun is also giving free 10 minutes' worth of Sun-to-Sun voice calls. With Sun's TU 15, students can easily communicate with their schoolmates about projects and assignments. Parents can easily check on their kids in school any time throughout the day, and the *barkada* can text away without worry to plan the next big back-to-school party. Sun's TU 15 is now available through Xpressload at all Sun loading stations. Visit The Sun Shop within your area; call 3958000; or visit www.suncellular.com.ph.

INSTANT PRIZES. Robinsons malls nationwide present "Dad's Incredible," a Fathers' Day celebration on June 17. Moms and kids must register their husband or father at the Activity Area of each mall from 10 a.m. for a chance to win instant prizes in the hourly raffle draws from 12 noon-5 p.m. Product demos and workshops will be conducted by Handyman Do-It-Best at Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Starmills Pampanga, Robinsons Metro East, Robinsons Place Pioneer and Robinsons Place Novaliches. Trivia games will be held in selected Robinsons malls. Call 6836137 or 6836100 locals 780/782.

CANONIZATION ANNIVERSARY. To commemorate the fifth anniversary of the canonization of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, the Philippine Center for St. Pio of Pietrelcina, Inc., a nonstock, nonprofit organization engaged in propagating the teachings of St. Pio, will hold a eucharistic celebration on June 16, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., at the St. Pio Chapel, 188 E. Rodrigues, Jr. Avenue (C5), Bagumbayan, QC. Call or fax 6342669; e-mail admin@saintpiocenter.co.

PHOTO CONTEST. Take extraordinary, funny and spontaneous images anytime, anywhere and join the Sony Ericsson Top Shot Photo Competition. Upload your entries on the Top Shot website www.sonyericsson.com/topshot. Deadline for submission of entries is July 31. Prizes include two round-trip tickets to Boracay and a Sony Ericsson K810i Cyber-shot phone. Visit the Sony Ericsson Cyber-shot interactive newsroom June 15-17 at the atrium of the Main Mall, SM Mall of Asia; and July 6-8 at the lower level of Glorietta 3.

FORUM. De La Salle University-Manila's College of Computer Studies holds its 4th National Natural Language Processing Research Symposium with the theme "Philippine Language and Computation," until June 16 at the De La Salle-College of St. Benilde Hotel. Call 520402 or 5360277 to 78.

PHOTO CONTEST. The 1st Philippine Airlines Photo Contest "The Beauty of the Philippines" will be launched on June 22 at Embassy, The Fort, Global City. It is open to all amateur, professional and kids who love photography. The contest aims to promote the country's ecotourism. A series of photo clinics will be conducted from June-August by five of the country's top lensmen: George Tapan, Bien Baustista, Edwin Loyola, Vic Sison and Jay Alonzo. Visit www.palphotocontest.com or www.philphotography.net. E-mail at eastgate.oneworkshop@gmail.com.

FATHER'S DAY CELEBRATION. The Star Group of Malls celebrates Father's Day with special freebies. Shop at Finds Superstore on June 17, as the mall holds a three-day mallwide sale. Call 7244992 and 8422513.

Father's Best Friend.

Crocodile Leather

ITALY
PabDer
UOMO

Upto 50% off on selected items.
June 8 - 17, 2007

Shangri-La Plaza • Glorietta 3, Ayala Center • Robinsons Galleria • Robinsons Place Manila • Shoppesville, Greenhills • Gateway Mall - Araneta Center • Alabang Town Center • Festival Supermall Ayala Center Cebu • SM City Cebu • Robinsons Place Bacolod • Soon to open TriNoma

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2143 Series of 2007

Mall's Father's Day treats

LET DAD KNOW HE IS NO. 1 TO YOU through special treats on Father's Day at Araneta Center.

Mandarin Deli's Father's Day lunch or dinner buffet features, for starters, Grilled Beef Salad with bell peppers in grain mustard dressing, Japanese California Rolls with Wasabe, Tomato Bisque Soup with crab wanton.

Entrées include Pan-fried Medallions of Veal with green asparagus in herb cream sauce; Grilled Chicken with bacon and mushrooms; Malaysian Lamb Curry with cashew nuts and mango chutney.

For dessert, choose from assorted French pastries, Mint Cheesecake and others.

Dads who avail of the Mandarin Deli buffet get a 20-percent discount card from Rustan's Department Store. The lunch and dinner buffet costs P680++. Kids 12 years old and below get 50-percent off the buffet rate. The Mandarin Oriental Café and Deli is on the first level of Gateway Mall.

Discounts and freebies for dads are also being offered at Araneta Center's over 1,000 shops and food places. A P1,000 single or accumulated purchase at any Araneta establishment entitles dads to a free gift from Rustan's. Gifts may be claimed from any promo booth in the center.

Mendrez and Artwork is holding a Father's Day sale at Ali Mall until June 17. Blue Magic Ali Mall presents an array of gifts for Dad. At Greenwich Farmers Plaza, Dad can get a free key chain or mug for every P200 purchase. He gets a Blade Auto Center cash coupon worth P200 when he dines at Super Bowl of China. All fathers get a free food sampler at Pizza Hut.

Pfizer and Pharmalink will hold a free clinic for dads on Father's Day at Ali Mall, Farmers Plaza and Farmers Market. Dads will also get free consultations and gift items. Visit www.aranetacenter.net.

SPECIAL treats await dads at Araneta Center.

Authentic grand piano feel.
Built for your expressive playing.

DGX-620

Inquire about our "ID-12 Deals", Interest Deleted for 12 months Promo from June 12 to August 31, 2007. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2189 Series of 2007.

YAMAHA

YUPANGCO MUSIC CORPORATION
339 Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City 1200
Tel. No.: 899-9595 (connecting all departments); Fax Nos.: 899-7777 & 899-6888
Toll Free No.: 1-800-1-888-9595; E-mail: info@yupangco.com

Available at Yamaha Music Stores and select dealers nationwide.
www.yupangco.com

Stunning timepieces

TOMMY Hilfiger Ace Pink

STORM Remi Square Black

TOMMY Hilfiger Blackbird

ACE, THE NEW TOMMY HILFIGER WATCH, is a combination of sporty and chic.

A sparkling Swarovski crystal "T" is integrated into the watch design, embellishing the bracelet or strap where it attaches to the case. The white dial with minute track running along the outer edge is enhanced by a mother-of-pearl center zone detailed with the Tommy Hilfiger logo and flag.

The brand is also engraved on the stainless-steel bezel. Ace is offered on a polished stainless-steel bracelet accented by enamel center links in black, white and pink. It is also available in calfskin strap.

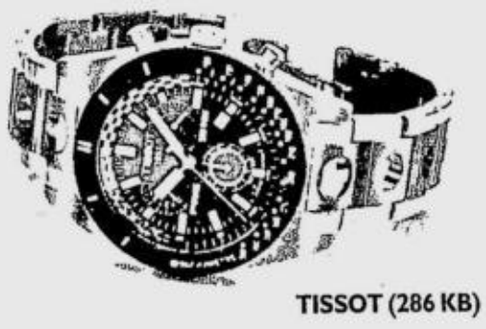
The Remi watch, meanwhile, has a red dot that determines the hour while the revolving center disc with the red arrow shows the minutes. This comes in either black or white dial, both with Storm logo with moving color strips above.

Another innovation is showcased in Tissot watches, with the retrograde movement now gracing the popular PRS516 chrono timepiece. It is an unusual chronograph display divided into 30 seconds, with the sweeping second hand working anticlockwise from 9 o'clock to return to its place automatically after a time lapse of two hours. High precision mixed with cutting-edge design and exclusive technology marks this sports timepiece.

From Red Square to your wrist, Vostok-Europe brings the finest in automatic timekeeping. The Vostok Expedition series takes its inspiration from the Expedition-Trophy, which is the longest winter off-road race in the world.

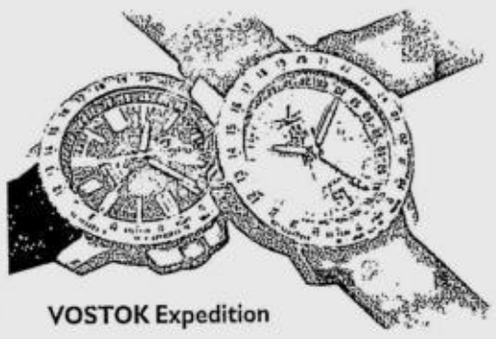
These watches are available in all No Curfew, Gift Gate, SM Department Stores, Rustan's Department Stores, Landmark, 6750 Department Stores, Robinson's Department Stores and Sport Shops.

APPETIME Kiwi Watch



TISSOT (286 KB)

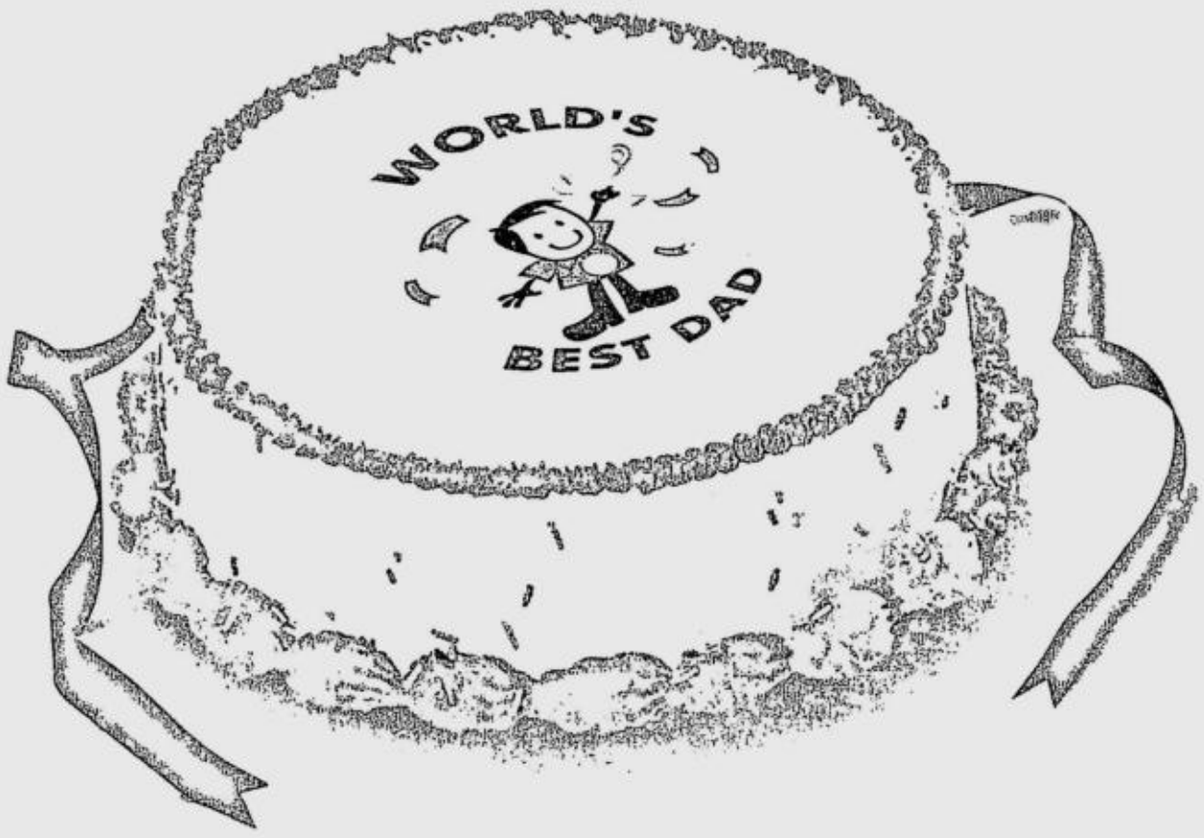
ANDY Warhol Caution Watch



VOSTOK Expedition

STORM Energy Brown

You fill him with pride on father's day!



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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

LIFESTYLE

Contributing Editor Ria Francisco-Prieto

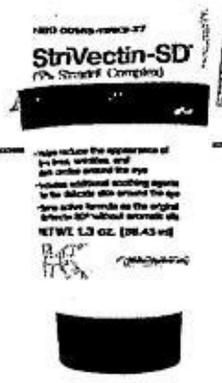
For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle

Text us your feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

BEAUTY

STRIVECTIN-SD Intensive Concentrate for Existing Stretch Marks (P9,980)



STRIVECTIN-SD Eye Cream, (P4,650)

Botox the easy way

StriVectin-SD, originally formulated to help reduce stretch marks, also works wonders against facial wrinkles

I HAVE STRETCH MARKS. IF IT were because I'd given birth or because of sudden weight gain or loss, I probably wouldn't be so shocked.

Nobody warned me, though, about stretch marks due to puberty. All I remember was, before getting my period my thighs were so itchy that I kept scratching until my skin was all red and I had fine wounds.

My mom brought me to the dermatologist about three months after when the red lines had worsened and turned purple. We found out they were on their way to becoming stretch marks, there was no cure for them. The doctor did say they would get lighter through time. Like I really cared!

KNOCKOUT!

Ria Francisco-Prieto

I just wanted them to disappear. I still do. That's why when I heard about StriVectin-SD from a friend, I felt it was a Godsend. But the product wasn't available here yet.

Well, now it is!

I was so happy when I received an invitation for StriVectin-SD's launch in Manila. I was extremely surprised to find out that the treatment can also be applied on the face as a replacement for Botox, since according to Dr. Chevreau, the medical expert who introduced the product, "Topical creams offer gradual, continual results, while the effects of injections, facial peels and dermabrasions are rougher on the skin and wear off."

I second the motion! Now, I feel like I've hit two birds with one stone, because I was already toying with the idea of getting Botox shots once I hit a certain age. But with StriVectin-SD, I'd get Botox-like results, but with no injections.

StriVectin-SD was really formulated for stretch marks, but when samples were distributed some people started using it as a moisturizer aside from treating their stretch marks with it. They got good results either way, that's why StriVectin-SD now sports the tag: "The stretch mark cream turned anti-wrinkle phenomenon!"

Frequently asked questions

HOW DOES STRIVECTIN-SD WORK?

StriVectin-SD is a quick-absorbing, bio-functional topical formula originally developed to reduce the appearance of existing stretch marks. It includes a proprietary combination of skin-firming agents, elasticizers and skin hydrators. The wrinkle-reducing compound in StriVectin-SD actually makes your skin

FREQUENTLY/ H4

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On Charlene: Blouse and pants from Philosophy, an exclusive brand of SM.

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BICUTAN • LUCENA • BAGUIO • MARILAO • DASMARIÑAS • BATANGAS • DELGADO • SAN LAZARO • SUCAT • STA. ROSA • CLARK • MALL OF ASIA • LIPA • BACOLOD

Milcu

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MINI DV CAMCORDER

ZR800 MiniDV Camcorder (NEW)
- 6.8 Megapixels, 1/6" Sensor • 35x optical zoom
- DIGIC DV image processor • Electronic Image Stabilizer
- Smooth Zoom Control • 3 pre-set zoom speeds
- 2.7" LCD Screen

FREE: Video Case + (1) DVM-E60 + Tripod
NOW: P19,950 — P1,662.50 12 mos. 0%

ZR830 MiniDV Camcorder (NEW)
- 6.8 Megapixels, 1/6" Sensor • 35x optical zoom
- DIGIC DV image processor • Electronic Image Stabilizer
- SD card slot for photo storage & Motion JPEG Type
- 2.7" LCD Screen

FREE: Video Case + (1) DVM-E60 + Tripod
NOW: P22,950 — P1,912.50 12 mos. 0%

Zr850 MiniDV Camcorder (NEW)
- 1.07 Megapixels, 1.6" Sensor • 35x optical zoom
- Electronic Image Stabilizer • SD card slot for photo storage and Motion JPEG Type • 2.7" LCD Screen

FREE: Video Case + (1) DVM-E60 + 512MB Mini SD + Tripod
NOW: P27,950 — P2,329.17 12 mos. 0%

POWERSHOT

PowerShot A460 Digital Still Camera (NEW)
- 5.0 Megapixels • 4x optical zoom • DIGIC II, iSAPS and 5-point AiAF • Wide range of shooting modes
- 2.0" LCD Screen

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PowerShot A630 Digital Still Camera (NEW)
- 8 Megapixels w/ 2.5" vari-angle LCD
- 4x optical zoom w/ safety zoom & digital teleconverter

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DIGITAL SLR

IXUS i7 ZOOM Digital Still Camera
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- 15 shooting modes • Movie recording up to 1GB file size

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IXUS 75 Digital Still Camera (NEW)
- 7.1 Megapixels • 3x Optical zoom • DIGIC III Engine
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- DiG!C III Engine • Face Detect AF/AE/FE • ISO 1600 and Auto ISO Shift • 17 shooting modes and My Colors
- VGA movies and Time Lapse Movie

FREE: 512MB SD Card + Waterproof Neck Wallet
NOW: P19,950 — P1,662.50 12 mos. 0%

PowerShot A550 Digital Still Camera (NEW)
- 7.1 Megapixels
- 4x Optical zoom
- DIGIC II, iSAPS and 9-point AiAF
- Redesigned shooting mode dial
- 30fps VGA movies w/ sound

FREE: 512MB SD Card + Waterproof Neck Wallet
NOW: P13,500 — P1,125.00 12 mos. 0%

PowerShot A710S Digital Still Camera (NEW)
- 7.1 Megapixels w/ 2.5" LCD Screen
- 6x optical zoom w/ 1cm macro functionality
- Optical Image Stabilizer

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NOW: P23,500 — P1,958.33 12 mos. 0%

PowerShot A560 Digital Still Camera (NEW)
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- 4x Optical zoom
- DiG!C III Digital Imaging Processor
- One touch Shooting/ Playback Button
- VGA Movie Recording

FREE: 512MB SD Card + Waterproof Neck wallet
NOW: P15,950 — P1,329.17 12 mos. 0%

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- 10 Megapixels w/ 2.5" vari-angle LCD
- 4x optical zoom w/ safety zoom & digital teleconverter

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COLOR TV

AQUOS LCD TV

FREE Wall Bracket & Installation OR ADD P1,999 for LCD Rack (c/o Service Center)

SHARP

14V-R70M 14" MTS Stereo — SRP: P4,798 P799.67 6 mos. 0%

20V-R70M 20" MTS Stereo — SRP: P6,698 P1,116.33 6 mos. 0%

21V-R70M 21" MTS Stereo — SRP: P6,998 P1,166.33 6 mos. 0%

LC-32BX6M 32" — Less 5% on CASH purchase — SRP: P69,998 P5,833.17 12 mos. 0%

LC-37BX6M 37" — Less 5% on CASH purchase — SRP: P99,998 P8,333.17 12 mos. 0%

LC-37BX5M 37" BEST BUY! — FREE: Water Dispenser (For Cash Purchase Only), 16" Stand Fan (6 to 12 mo. Term Only) — Less 5% on CASH purchase — SRP: P78,998 P6,583.17 12 mos. 0%

21V-FR80M 21" Mono Sound Flat CTV [53.34cm] — FREE: TV Rack + 16" Stand Fan — SRP: P8,698 P724.83 12 mos. 0%

21V-FR310S (BK) 21" MTS Stereo Flat CTV [53.34cm] — ADD P700 for TV Rack; FREE: 16" Stand Fan — SRP: P10,698 P891.50 12 mos. 0%

29V-FT95S Flat CTV [73.66cm] — FREE: TV Rack + MP3 Player + 16" Stand Fan — SRP: P19,998 P1,666.50 12 mos. 0%

29V-FR400S (BK) Flat CTV [73.66cm] — FREE: TV Rack + MP3 Player + 16" Stand Fan — SRP: P23,798 P1,983.17 12 mos. 0%

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FREE: Square Dish

R-390H 34 Liter Open Capacity — SRP: P6,598 P1,099.67 6 mos. 0%

R-340F 34 Liter Open Capacity — SRP: P5,698 P949.67 6 mos. 0%

R-240F 23 Liter Open Capacity — SRP: P4,798 P799.67 6 mos. 0%

R-220F 23 Liter Open Capacity — SRP: P3,998 P666.33 6 mos. 0%

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DV-SL1000W P2,998

FRENCH DOOR

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SJ-19T(SL) 6.7 cu.ft. Gross Capacity — SRP: P10,198 P849.83 12 mos. 0%

SJ-14T(SL) 5.2 cu.ft. Gross Capacity — SRP: P9,498 P791.50 12 mos. 0%

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WASHING MACHINE

FREE: Ariel Ultramatic

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FREE: Flat Iron

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ES-7530TFS(GR) 7.5 kg. Dry Load Capacity — SRP: P9,598 P799.83 12 mos. 0%

ES-5515TS 5.5 kg. Dry Load Capacity — SRP: P7,498 P624.83 12 mos. 0%

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ES-AG850P Fully Auto 8 kg. Dry Load Capacity — SRP: P19,598 P1,633.17 12 mos. 0%

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- Twin Digital Combo Filter
- Picture Noise Reduction
- Super VM

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12 mos. 0%

TC-29FX20P [AV STEREO] 29"
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- Picture Noise Reduction
- Super VM

SRP: P22,999
P1,916.58
12 mos. 0%

FX series

TC-21FX30P [MTS] 21"
- Picture Noise Reduction
- 5-Band Equalizer
- Virtual Hyper Bass (VHB)

SRP: P10,699
P891.58
12 mos. 0%

TC-21FX20P [AV STEREO] 21"
- Picture Noise Reduction
- 5-Band Equalizer
- Virtual Hyper Bass (VHB)

SRP: P9,699
P808.25
12 mos. 0%

TC-21FX10P [MONO] 21"
- Picture Noise Reduction
- Taglish On-Screen Display
- Closed Caption Decoder

SRP: P9,199
P766.58
12 mos. 0%

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- 3000W PMPO • Multi Format Playback including Divx • 5-Disc changer

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SRP: P12,999
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6 mos. 0%

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PV-GS81 MiniDV Camcorder
- 1CCD Camera System
- 32x Optical Zoom
- Mini DV Tape Recording Format
- 2.7" Wide LCD

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PV-GS85 MiniDV Camcorder
- 3CCD Camera System
- 3.1 Mega Still Picture Recording
- 10x Optical Zoom
- 2.7" Wide LCD

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FREE Tripod + Bag + DVC Tape
P1,999.92 12 mos. 0%

NV-GS320 MiniDV Camcorder
- 3CCD Camera System • 3.1 Mega Still Picture Recording
- 10x Optical Zoom • 2.7" Wide LCD

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P3,333.25 12 mos. 0%

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VDR-D200 Digital Video Camera
- 5.0 Megapixel • DVD-RAM / DVD-R / DVD-RW
- 30x Optical Zoom • 2.5" LCD Monitor

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NOW: **P35,999**
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FREE Tripod + Bag + DVD-R & DVD-RW
P1,499.96 24 mos. 0%

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DMC-LS70 Digital Still Camera
- 7.2 Megapixel
- 3x Optical Zoom
- 27MB Built-in Memory
- 2.0" LCD Monitor

NOW: **P10,999**
FREE Camera Pouch + 512MB SD Card
P916.58 12 mos. 0%

DMC-LS75 Digital Still Camera
- 7.2 Megapixel
- 3x Optical Zoom
- 27MB Built-in Memory
- 2.5" LCD Monitor

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DMC-FX10 Digital Still Camera
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- 27MB Built-in Memory • 2.5" LCD Monitor

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DMC-LZ7 Digital Still Camera
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- 27MB Built-in Memory • 2.5" LCD Monitor

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DMC-FX07 Digital Still Camera
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• Super Alleru-Buster Filter

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FREE Decorative Frame + Mug Set

DELUXE
- 12 Hour ON/OFF Timer
- 12 Hour OFF Timer

MODEL	Cooling Capacity (kJ/h)	Floor Area (m²)	Power Input (W)	E.E.R. (kJ/Wh)	S.R.P.	12 Months 0%
• CW-XC83JPH	7,420 [0.8 HP]	11-14	645	11.5	P14,499	P1,208.25
• CW-XC93JPH	9,500 [1.0 HP]	15-18	900	10.6	P16,799	P1,399.92
• CW-XC103VPH	11,000 [1.0 HP]	15-21	940	11.7	P17,899	P1,491.58
• CW-XC123VPH	13,000 [1.5 HP]	22-25	1,210	10.7	P19,999	P1,666.58
•• CW-XC183EPH	19,900 [2.0 HP]	26-36	1,890	10.5	P24,199	P2,016.58
•• CW-XC243EPH	25,500 [2.5 HP]	37-48	2,660	9.6	P27,299	P2,274.92

DELUXE
- 12 Hour ON/OFF Timer

MODEL	H.P.	Floor Area (m2)	Power Input (W)	E.E.R. (kJ/Wh)	S.R.P.	12 Months 0%
CW-C63JPH	5,500 [0.6 HP]	<10.5	500	11.0	P10,199	P 849.92
CW-C83JPH	7,420 [0.8 HP]	11-14	645	11.5	P13,999	P1,166.58
CW-C103VPH	11,000 [1.0 HP]	15-21	940	11.7	P16,799	P1,399.92
CW-C123VPH	13,000 [1.5 HP]	22-25	1,210	10.7	P18,899	P1,574.92

STANDARD
- 12 Hour ON/OFF Timer

MODEL	H.P.	Floor Area (m2)	Power Input (W)	E.E.R. (kJ/Wh)	S.R.P.	12 Months 0%
CW-SC63JPH	5,550 [0.6 HP]	<10.5	500	11.0	P 9,199	P 766.58
CW-SC83JPH	7,420 [0.8 HP]	11-14	645	11.5	P13,499	P1,124.92
CW-SC93JPH	9,500 [1.0 HP]	15-18	900	10.6	P14,199	P1,183.25
CW-SC103VPH	11,000 [1.0 HP]	15-21	940	11.7	P15,299	P1,274.92
CW-SC123VPH	13,000 [1.5 HP]	22-25	1,210	10.7	P17,899	P1,491.58
CW-SC183EPH	19,900 [2.0 HP]	26-36	1,890	10.5	P22,599	P1,883.25
CW-SC243EPH	25,500 [2.5 HP]	37-48	2,660	9.6	P25,199	P2,099.92

CW-C102VPH [1.0 HP]
SRP: P15,999
P1,333.25
12 mos. 0%

CW-C122VPH [1.5 HP]
SRP: P17,999
P1,499.92
12 mos. 0%

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FREE Installation Package (1st 10ft copper tubing) + Sports Bag Set

AC Robot COOL-PICK 1 — SUPER DELUXE
SAVE P12,504
CS/CU-XC12EKQ 12,890 [1.50 HP]
BEFORE: P42,999
NOW: **P30,495**
P2,541.25 12 mos. 0%

COOL-PICK 2
SAVE P8,100
CS/CU-XC9EKQ 9,940 [1.00 HP]
BEFORE: P35,999
NOW: **P27,899**
P2,324.97 12 mos. 0%

INVERTER DELUXE
- INVERTER Technology
- e-Ion Air Purifying System

MODEL	Cooling Capacity (kJ/h)	Floor Area (m²)	Power Input (W)	E.E.R. (kJ/Wh)	S.R.P.	12 Months 0%
CS/CU-S12GKQ	11,630 [1.50 HP]	22 & below	855	13.6	P36,499	P3,041.58
CS/CU-S15GKQ	15,840 [1.75 HP]	30 & below	1,270	12.5	P42,399	P3,533.25

DELUXE
- e-Ion Air Purifying System
- Patrol Sensor

MODEL	Cooling Capacity (kJ/h)	Floor Area (m2)	Power Input (W)	E.E.R. (kJ/Wh)	S.R.P.	12 Months 0%
CS/CU-C9GKQ	9,540 [1.0 HP]	15-18	830	11.5	P27,899	P2,324.92
CS/CU-C12GKQ	12,780 [1.5 HP]	19-24	1,150	11.1	P30,499	P2,541.58
CS/CU-C18GKQ	19,080 [2.0 HP]	25-36	1,730	11.0	P38,499	P3,208.25
CS/CU-C24GKQ	25,310 [2.5 HP]	37-48	2,580	9.8	P42,899	P3,574.92

STANDARD
- 24-Hr ON/OFF Real Setting Timer

MODEL	Cooling Capacity (kJ/h)	Floor Area (m2)	Power Input (W)	E.E.R. (kJ/Wh)	S.R.P.	12 Months 0%
CS/CU-PC9EKQ	9,540 [1.0 HP]	15-18	860	11.1	P22,999	P1,916.58
CS/CU-PC12EKQ	12,740 [1.5 HP]	19-24	1,240	10.3	P26,299	P2,191.58
CS/CU-PC18DKQ	18,800 [2.0 HP]	25-36	1,880	10.0	P34,699	P2,891.58
CS/CU-PC24DKQ	25,310 [2.5 HP]	37-48	2,820	9.0	P38,999	P3,249.92

Ref & Freezer

FREE Gas Stove (Except NR-A303DP)

NR-A303DP Personal Refrigerator
- 3 cu.ft. (85L)
- Manual Defrost System
- Frozen Food Storage Volume: 9.3 liters
- Fresh Food Storage Volume: 75.7 liters

SRP: P7,499
P624.92
12 mos. 0%

Titanium Grey / Snowy White — SINGLE DOOR
NR-A605EC
- 6 cu.ft. (187L)
- Semi Auto Defrost System
- Frost Free Fan Cooling System

SRP: P9,999
P833.25
12 mos. 0%

NR-B705AC
- 7 cu.ft. (213L)
- Fully Automatic Defrost System
- Frost Free Fan Cooling System

SRP: P15,799
P1,316.58
12 mos. 0%

Titanium Grey / Snowy White — FROST FREE

NR-B705DC
- 7 cu.ft. (206L)
- Semi-automatic Defrost System
- Anti-bacterial Water Dispenser

SRP: P14,799
P1,233.25
12 mos. 0%

Snowy White / Titanium Grey / Metallic Blue — TWO DOOR

NR-B805DC
- 8 cu.ft. (233L)
- Semi-automatic Defrost System
- Anti-bacterial Water Dispenser

SRP: P15,799
P1,316.58
12 mos. 0%

Snowy White / Titanium Grey / Metallic Blue — TWO DOOR

NR-A805F
- 8 cu.ft. (218L)
- High Efficiency, Low Noise Compressor
- Rust Proof Inner Wall

SRP: P15,999
P1,333.25
12 mos. 0%

Snowy White — UPRIGHT FREEZER

WALL FAN

Body Color: Midnight Blue
F-45PWP
- 18" Rust-free Metal Blade
- Insulated Motor
- Automatic Lubrication
- Double Oscillation
- Thermal Fuse
- Easy Tilt Adjustment

P2,039

WALL FAN

Blade Color: Blue
Body Color: White
F-40WYP
- 16" Blade Diameter
- Thermal Fuse
- Automatic Lubrication
- Double Oscillation
- Easy Tilt Adjustment

P1,709

LIVING FAN

Body Color: Midnight Blue
F-45PLP
- 18" Rust-free Metal Blade
- Insulated Motor
- Automatic Lubrication
- Double Oscillation
- Thermal Fuse
- Easy Tilt Adjustment

P2,489

STAND FAN

Blade Color: Blue / Green
Body Color: White
Blade Color: Transparent Black
Body Color: Midnight Blue
F-40SWP
- 16" Blade Diameter
- Thermal Fuse
- Automatic Lubrication
- Double Oscillation
- Easy Tilt Adjustment

P2,099

STAND FAN

Blade Color: Blue / Green
Body Color: White
F-40SYP
- 16" Blade Diameter
- Thermal Fuse
- Automatic Lubrication
- Double Oscillation
- Easy Tilt Adjustment

P1,649

LIVING FAN

Blade Color: Blue / Green
Body Color: White
F-40LYP
- 16" Blade Diameter
- Thermal Fuse
- Automatic Lubrication
- Double Oscillation
- Easy Tilt Adjustment

P1,599

Washing Machine

FREE Flat Iron (Except for Single Tub)

SINGLE TUB — Avocado Shake / Powder Blue
NA-S526B
- 5.2kg Dry Wt. Capacity
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SRP: P3,499
P583.17
6 mos. 0%

SINGLE TUB — Peach
NA-S686B
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SRP: P4,499
P749.83
6 mos. 0%

TWIN TUB — White / Avocado Shake
NA-W43R6
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- Big Size Pulsator

SRP: P6,199
P516.58
12 mos. 0%

TWIN TUB — White / Transparent Pomelo
NA-W55R6
- 5.5kg Dry Wt. Capacity
- Soakmatic Function

SRP: P7,199
P599.92
12 mos. 0%

FULLY AUTO — Titanium Grey
NA-F70G2X
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- Stainless Steel Tub

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12 mos. 0%

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KX-FT931 THERMAL PAPER
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- 28-Page Document Memory • Automatic Paper Cutter
- Digital Speaker Phone • Digital Answering System

SRP: P6,990
P1,165.00
6 mos. 0%

KX-FP342 PLAIN PAPER
- 4-Pages/Min. Printing Speed • Enhanced Copier Function • 28-Page Document Memory
- Sequential Broadcasting (20 locations)

SRP: P6,590
P1,098.33
6 mos. 0%

KX-FP362 PLAIN PAPER
- Full Digital Answering System • Digital Full-Duplex Speakerphone • 28-Page Document Memory
- Voice Time/Day Stamp

SRP: P8,590
P1,431.67
6 mos. 0%

KX-FM386 PLAIN PAPER
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SRP: P9,990
P1,665.00
6 mos. 0%

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Beauty Alert! • Beauty Alert! • Beauty Alert! •

INQUIRER Beauty is giving away three StriVectin-SD Intensive Concentrate for Existing Stretch Marks and three Eye Creams. E-mail us at rbeauty@inquirer.com.ph and tell us why you deserve to win. The first six entries will bring home the prizes!

Frequently asked questions

From page H1

appear thicker and firmer.

How do I apply StriVectin-SD?

Begin with clean, dry skin. Apply three times a day, every day, if using on stretch marks. Apply twice a day, every day, if using on wrinkles. Do not exceed three applications per 24-hour period. Use sparingly (it is extremely concentrated). Massage a small amount of StriVectin-SD into the target area, using a circular motion, until completely absorbed.

How much Strivectin-SD do I need to use?

Since StriVectin-SD is extremely concentrated, a little goes a long way. Typically you need an amount equal to a dime to cover the facial area and about the size of a quarter when using StriVectin-SD on stretch marks. These sizes may vary depending on the area you are covering.

When will I see the results?

In as little as 28 days, StriVectin-SD's proven, proprietary compounds will produce a visible reduction in the appearance of stretch marks (prominent because of either depth, length, discoloration and texture) and reduce the appearance of existing wrinkles.

Will StriVectin-SD help with old wrinkles/stretch marks?

Absolutely! StriVectin-SD can help no matter how long you've had your wrinkles/stretch marks—whether it's been 10 days or 10 years.

Can I use StriVectin-SD on the wrinkles/circles underneath my eyes?

The correct way to apply StriVectin-SD to the eye area is to softly massage it into the skin covering the orbital bone around the eyes. Do not apply StriVectin-SD directly underneath the eye or on top of the eyelid.

Can I use StriVectin-SD with other skin products?

StriVectin-SD can be used with virtually all other facial products. Test any combination of skincare products on the inside of your forearm before applying them to your face. Of course, if you are using a prescription skincare product consult your physician first. Remember, always apply StriVectin-SD first, then, if needed, you may apply a moisturizer or sunblock on top of it.

What were the results of the clinical trials?

The proprietary wrinkle-reducing compound StriVectin-SD was shown to improve the appearance of age spots and dark circles under the eye, and reduce the appearance of the actual length, depth, volume and surface area of stretch marks/wrinkles.

Can StriVectin-SD help with acne scars or other types of scarring?

Yes. Although StriVectin-SD was specifically formulated to help with the appearance of stretch marks (which are, after all, scars), many StriVectin-SD users have reported improvement in the appearance of acne scars, burn scars, chicken pox marks, scars from old injuries.

Will everyone see results?

Ninety-three percent of the subjects tested saw a dramatic difference in the appearance of their stretch marks.

Does StriVectin-SD work on all skin colors?

Yes.

Is StriVectin-SD safe?

StriVectin-SD has been proven to be safe and effective.

Available at Rustans Tower, Makati and Alabang.

MAGS the world over agree it's a beauty must-try!

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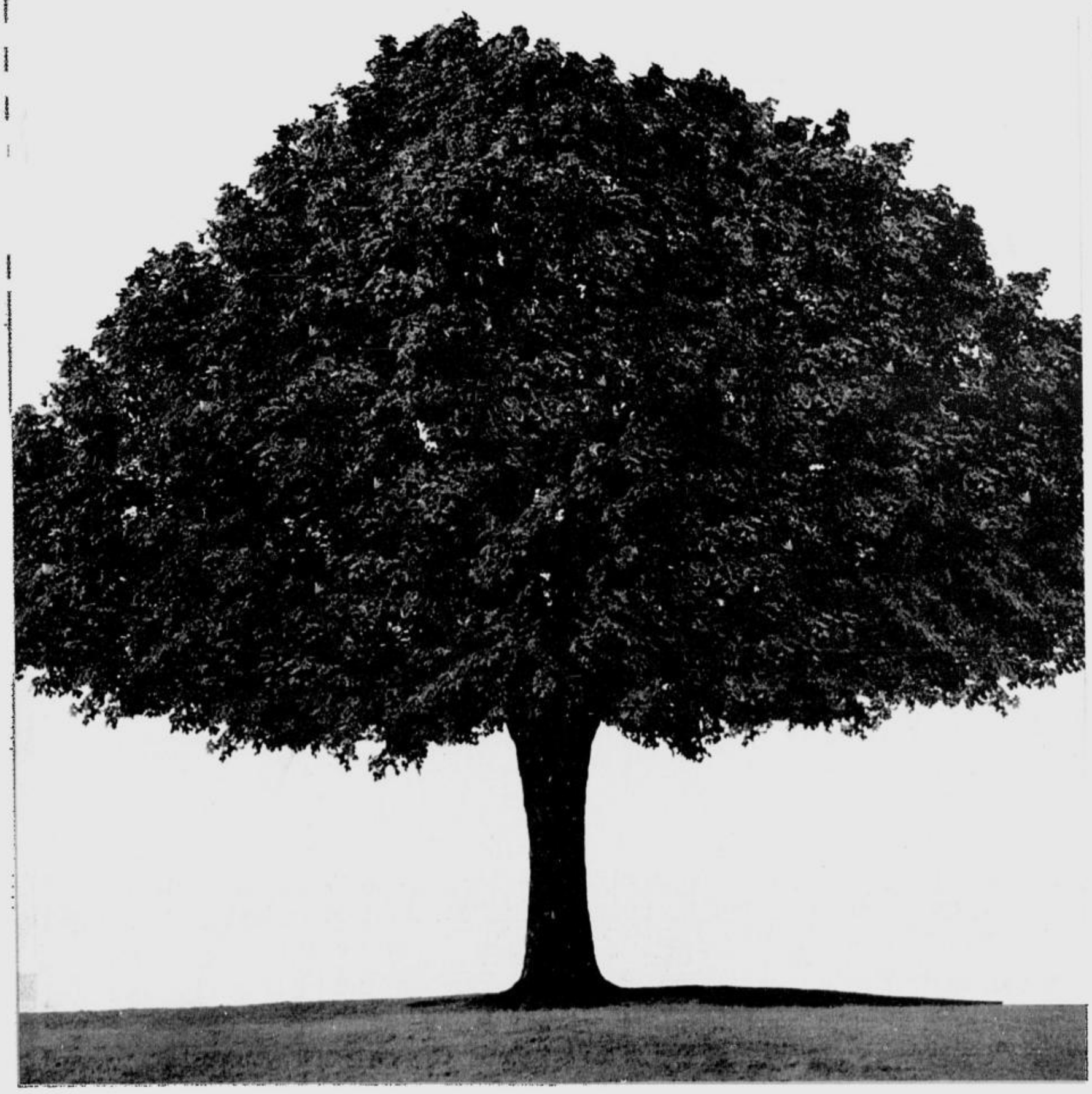

Slim down without the complications

My new favorite fat burner is called Green Tea, White Tea, Orange Tea Triple Fat Burner

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

SOME FACTS TO BEAR IN MIND:

Toxins from our food and environment are mostly fat-soluble, so they get stored in our fat cells.

These same toxins wear down our immune system. They make us retain water, bloat us, get us constipated, render us prone to parasites. We become fatter and acne-prone, we lose hair and become susceptible to sickness.

When we go on a crash diet, we end up sick, acne-studded, with bad breath, body odor, rashes and allergies. We have to eat to gain our strength back, ending up fatter than when we started.

Stress stifles the immune system, allowing toxins and free radicals to take control of our system.

How, then, are we to lose more than 10 pounds without our face aging fast or our head going bald?

Fat burners

Do continue your exercise program and diet by cutting down on carbohydrates, but you can help speed up the process with safe and effective fat burners, which help shed off the fat while repairing existing cell damage, preventing new ones from occurring, and eliminating excess water that causes bloating.

My new favorite fat burner is called Green Tea, White Tea, Orange Tea Triple Fat Burner (P880). It allows me to cut down on the number of supplements I take because it takes care of my weight loss, energy and antioxidant quota requirements.

One bottle has 30 gel tablets, but since you have to take at least two tablets a day, the serving size is cut down to 15. The gel capsule formula allows for faster and better absorption in the body, so the results quickly become visible and you actually absorb more of the potent ingredients.

Those who already have their own green tea fat-burning tablets that work need not buy this product. However, readers who have been cleared by doctors of any hormonal imbalance but still cannot lose weight fast enough with other tablets can try this one.

I take one tablet with my first two meals. Others take two, but I avoid taking it after 2 p.m. because the caffeine prevents me from sleeping at night.

Other supplements

The only other supplements I take are digestive enzyme tablets—either Lifetime Complete Enzyme (P800/90 tabs) or Nature's Secret Liquid Gel enzymes (60 ' gel caps/P1,800). I take them with lunch and dinner to help my body digest carbohydrates, fat and protein better. I usually wake up with a flatter stomach. Lifetime tablets are used by cancer patients to help them digest, so they are strong enough even if they aren't in gel form.

The other supplement I drink on a daily basis is Acidophilus Probiotics. It contains good bacteria which works against the bad bacteria in our system. Bad bacteria causes bloating, bad breath, constipation or diarrhea, acne, allergies, rashes, yeast infection and bad gas. Yeast overgrowth in the system also causes intense sugar cravings, itching and weight gain.

I take either Lifetime's Acidophilus 5 billion bacteria (P1,400) or NS Ultimate Probiotic 4 billion (P1,800) just once a day on an empty stomach, or 30 minutes before lunch or dinner. Research says we need five to 10 billion probiotics bacteria a day to keep our intestinal tract healthy and our immune system up.

Those who love Yakult and yogurt may not need to take Probiotics because the former are rich in live good bacteria. If you are prone to developing white coating on your tongue, most likely you have bad breath but don't know it.

I usually open a capsule and apply the contents on my tongue, letting them dissolve there so good bacteria can overpower the bad and neutralize any odor. The contents taste like bran or wheat, so you won't gag on them. Of course, do not forget to floss and brush your teeth afterwards.

Probiotics, aside from pre-natal vitamins, are the only other supplements expectant mothers are encouraged to take. They represent one of the most important ingredients of breast milk, which helps the baby's immune system.

I buy my supplements at Health Express Glorietta because I have a 20- to 25-percent member's discount on the sticker price. But I have seen these products in other health stores.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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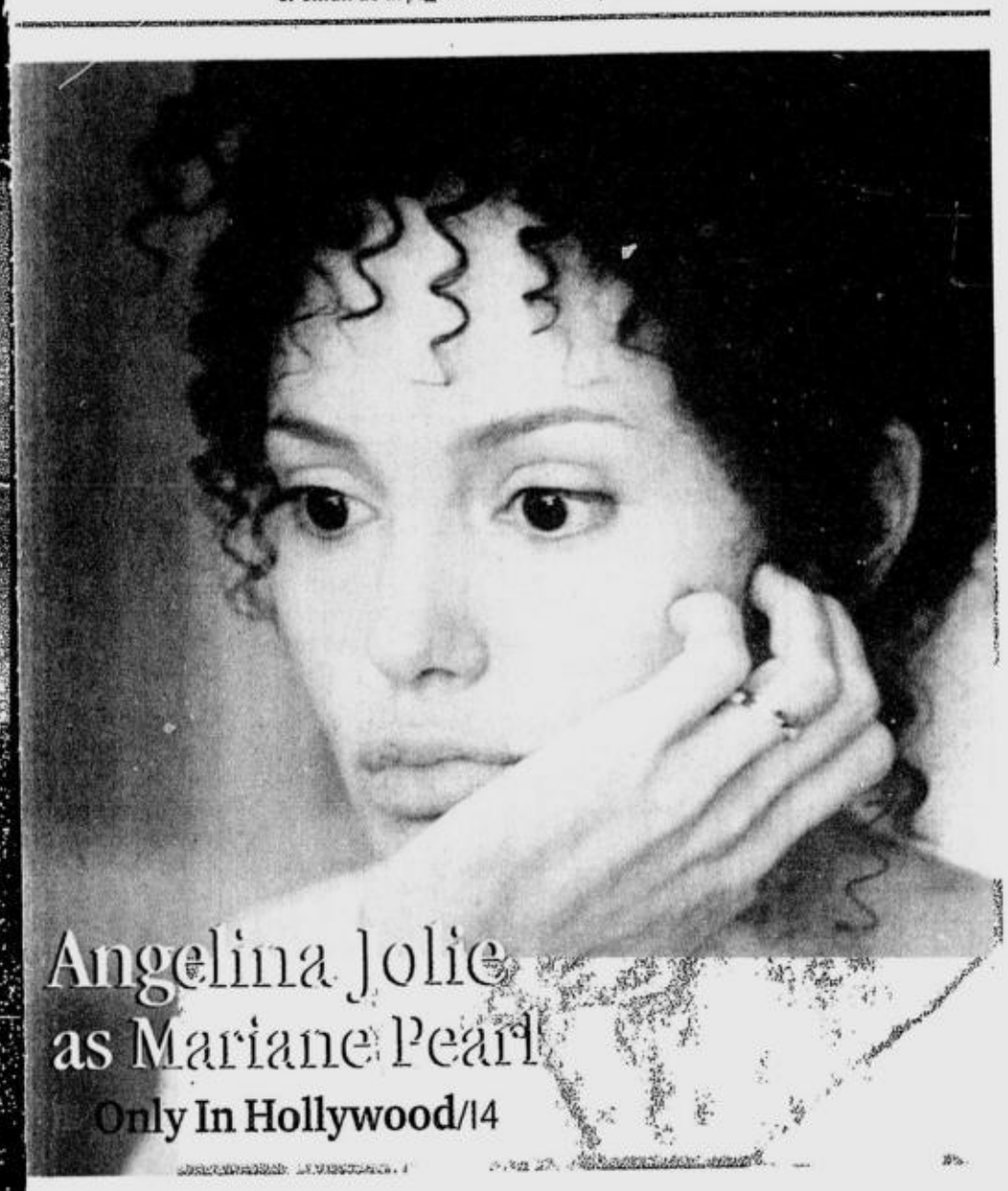
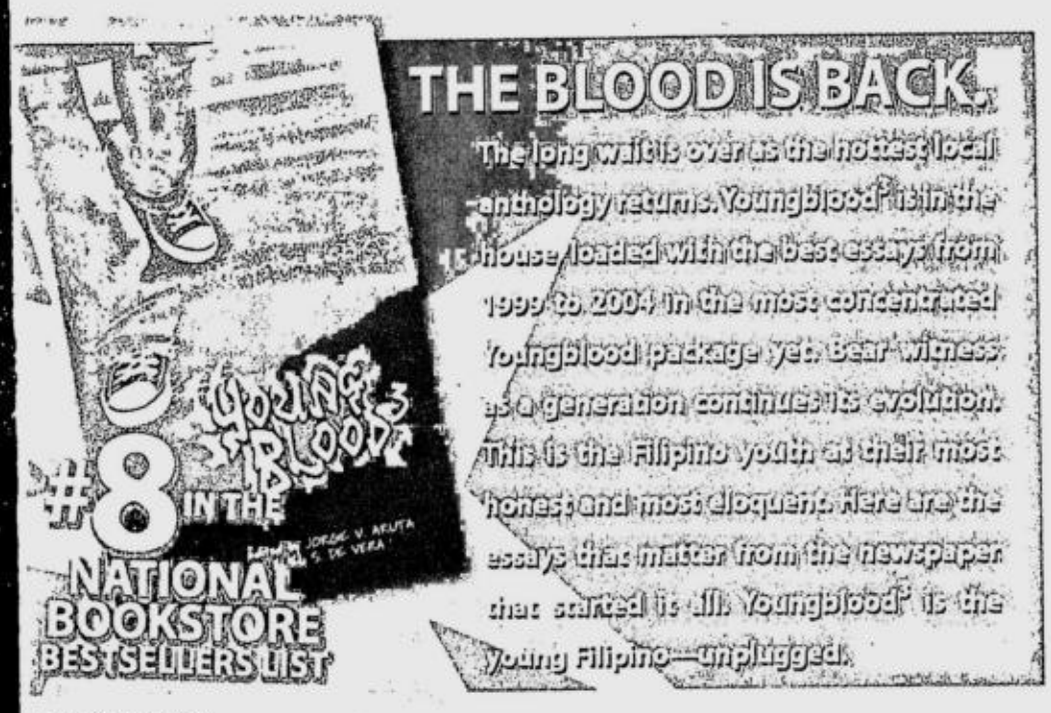


Angelina Jolie as Mariane Pearl

Only In Hollywood/14



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2 FANTASTIC FOUR
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

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2 FANTASTIC FOUR
3 OCEAN'S 13
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
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4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

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2 OCEAN'S 13
3 FANTASTIC FOUR
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7 RESERVED
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2 FANTASTIC FOUR
3 FANTASTIC FOUR
4 FANTASTIC FOUR
5 LUCKY YOU
6 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
7 OCEAN'S 13
8 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
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2 FANTASTIC FOUR
3 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
4 OCEAN'S 13

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3 FANTASTIC FOUR
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2 RESERVED
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4 SA PAGITAN NG LANGIT
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2 28 WEEKS LATER
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4 FANTASTIC FOUR

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2 THE FRUIT IS SWEELING

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Oh, those beautifu

By the Inquirer Entertainment Staff

SO WE WERE DRIVING ALONG EDSA ON SUNday and suddenly it struck us: Four of those beautiful women on the billboards have figured in not-so-happy situations in the recent past. Dawn Zulueta (rumors of separation), Kris Aquino (we all know what happened), Ruffa Gutierrez (we don't exactly know what's happening), Gretchen Barretto (what was that about?).

Note that they're all endorsers of the same brand of shampoo (Kris was ahead of the current pack). Only one other image model of that hair product hasn't had to fight off a rumor or scandal of late. Good job so far, Angel Aquino!

RUSHES

Taking the rap

This is a statement from John Estrada, on his smooching snapshots with Gretchen Barretto:

I did not want to talk. I did not want to give any satisfaction to those malicious minds that deliberately posted the photos on the Internet.

But I believe that many feelings have been hurt by all this, and I take the responsibility to set things right. I am taking the blame.

The photos were from my cell phone. It was a thoughtless moment and bad judgment to even take those photos. I never released, nor gave anyone permission, to release them.

I am not using as an excuse a night of partying and drinking, but, really, we were all good friends there, enjoying a private, surprise party. The kiss began there and ended there.

There were also n other at that time. Ku lik na iyon, di hindi marami.

No one has the rig good person. We hav She does not deserve

For all those I hav sorry. To M sincerely a this.

Reactio ment@inq

Not well

Speaking of Gretc Abunda how she wa lie. She is not well."

We asked Doug Quijano how his tal John was doi Dougs' answer: "Ayo muna siya kausapin."

Do you?

Asked wheth Gretchen Barretto w reckless enough to photographed kissi a man other than h partner Tony Boy C juangco, an execut close to the mo didn't hem or haw.

Said the exec: "D Hey, easy.

Loose lips sink sh

Two news anchor after violating the co tracts.

Turned out, the v gram hosts conflicti format. (The boss w the press.)

The reason that s two anchors. Tattle-t

Fallen franchise

RPN-9's "Philippin ly hemorrhaging to t

A network execu of the territory."

Faltering netwo

A TV network is sighed, "If the owne sell her bling-bling. v

Not so sweet

IZA CALZADO

After child stars gr

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE RECENT LEGAL AND CAreer woes of **Lindsay Lohan** have cast the spotlight anew on what happens to child stars after they grow up. Lohan had a glorious career acting in many hit movies when she was a child performer, but now that she's a young woman, she's having a hard time getting her act together as a film professional.

Last year, a producer wrote her a caustic letter, accusing her of being the cause of delay in the movie they were shooting, due to her late-night carousing and other instances of unprofessional behavior. More recently, she crashed the car she was driving and went into rehab to finally get a grip on her psychological problems.

Which leads some film buffs to wonder if there's anything inherent in the psyche of a child star that generally results in "trouble" after he or she has become an adult.

They point to the nights when child talents don't sleep while shooting, the adult company these children keep, the show biz glitz and gloss that tend to "artificialize" everything they see and do—even the hot lights used in filming, which they suspect of stunting young talents' physical growth!

True enough, quite a number of former child stars tend to become petite adults—**Shirley Temple, Mickey Rooney, Natalie Wood, Elizabeth Taylor** and **Judy Garland**—and, locally, **Vilma Santos, Roderick Paulate** and **Herbert Bautista.**

There *are* really tall exceptions like **Ian Veneracion**, but they tend to be the exceptions that prove the Lilliputian theory.

Psychologically, some ex-child stars have also come off much the worse for wear, as in the classic case of Judy Garland, who turns out to have been a victim of her own success as a singing moppet.

Now it can be told: Judy was so busy making one hit movie after another that her studio made her swallow uppers so she could work long hours, *then* take downers so she would fall asleep right away! The shocking drug use made Judy a big mess, and she never really recovered from that addictive regimen until she died.

On the *other* hand, Shirley Temple ended up as the US Ambassador to the United Nations—so, a dismal outcome is by no means cynically predictable. In local show business, **Niño Muhlach** has had his share of difficulties as a young adult, but Vilma Santos is now governor of Batangas. So, the same ambiguity obtains.

VILMA SANTOS

NIÑO MUHLACH

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l, troubled women on the billboards

...any of us taking photos of each ...g may malisya ang yakap at ha- ...ang nangyari iyon sa harap ng

...t to judge Ms. Gretchen. She is a ... been friends since the early '90s. ...ll the ugly talk.

... hurt unintentionally, I am very ... Gretchen and her loved ones, I ...ologize. None of them deserve

...s? E-mail: pr_entertain- ...uirer.com.ph.

...hen, we asked her manager Boy ...s doing. Boy's answer: "I cannot

...is ...nt ...g, ...ko ...ng

...er ...as ...er ...ng ...er ...o- ...ve ...ul

ROSANNA ROCES

...you think she's that stupid?"

...ips

...got a memo from their superior ...nfidentiality clause in their con-

...ry clever supervisor told the pro- ...g reasons for an impending re- ...nted to see who was blabbing to

...w print was the one given to the ...le mystery solved.

...es' Next Top Model" is reported- ...he tune of P10 million. ...ve said, "Losing millions is part

...k

...fast losing moolah. An insider ...could convince his girlfriend to ...e could pay all our debts."

JOHN ESTRADA

This ingenue with a sweet image supposedly likes romancing her partners with a red light bulb on.

Mmm, red-light lady.

Osang pa rin

Rosanna Roces to Cristy Fermin on "The Buzz": "*Ano ang kuneksyon ko kay* Lorna Tolentino? *Baka malaglag sila* (viewers) *sa kinauupuan nila pag sinabi ko.*"

Pops, miffed!

News that Ara Mina stayed at singer Martin Nievera's house in Las Vegas for a few days last month reportedly got ex-wife Pops Fernandez really miffed. Ara spent time with Robin and Ram, the singer's sons with Pops. Pops is currently dating Jomari Yllana, Ara's ex.

Me, a step-mom?

Rica Peralejo on her previous relationship with Bernard Palanca: "Never *kong nakita ang sarili ko na magiging ina ng anak ni* BJ." They were sweethearts longer (years) than Bernard was married to Meryll Soriano (four months). Meryll is pregnant with BJ's child.

Richard Gutierrez of America

The short list for the Richard Gutierrez role in "The Echo," a.k.a. the Hollywood remake of "Sigaw," included an Oscar nominee and a Screen Actors Guild award winner.

A source said Ryan Phillipe and Mark Wahlberg read and liked the script, but the lead role eventually went to Jesse Bradford, Phillipe's co-star in "Flags of Our Fathers." (See Only In Hollywood, page J4)

Several A-list actresses are reportedly vying for the lead female part, originated by Angel Locsin.

Funny thing is, while Angel and Richard were never mentioned for the Hollywood remake, Iza Calzado is still in the running for the battered wife role.

Raymond to IC: Sorry

Raymond Gutierrez reportedly apologized to IC Mendoza about the ongoing word war between his mother Annabelle Rama and sister Ruffa Gutierrez, and IC's mom, journalist Dolly Anne Carvajal.

Deadly cast

Filming of the indie film "Tribu" was delayed twice, first because one of the actors got stabbed, and again when another spent time in jail. "Tribu's" stars are real gang members in Tondo.

That's Robin

Robin Padilla's most memorable moments while doing "Asian Treasures?" He doesn't think twice: "*'Yung mga* kissing scenes *namin ni* Angel." Never mind his death-defying stunts.

Eyewitness

While watching daughter Ruffa Gutierrez's interview on the show biz talk program "Star Talk," an eyewitness says a tear dropped "from the right eye" of the Gutierrez patriarch, Eddie.

Brokeback Bruce

•Bruce Willis said Tuesday in Tokyo he was thrilled to still be acting at age 52, in the film "Die Hard 4.0." *AFP*

•Bruce Willis breaks back into action. *AP*

Never been in love

Original "American Idol" Kelly Clarkson: "I have never said the words 'I love you' to anyone in a romantic relationship. Ever." *AP*

No longer cute

Paris Hilton says she is done with her "dumb" act. "I'm 26 years old, and that act is no longer cute." *AP*

ANGEL AQUINO

...ow up

In general, however, child luminaries appear to have a tough time of it as adults, mainly because they can't sustain their stardom through their teen and grownup years. The loss of fame and income really rankles, so some of them get into more trouble than they bargained for.

This should serve as a cautionary note for current child talents' parents or handlers. They should realize that fun's fun and the extra money sure is welcome, but child stardom can be *dangerous* to their kids!

This is serious stuff, with even more serious possible consequences, so they must make sure to protect their children from the very real dangers that come with child stardom.

'Only Human'

Jed Madela's new "Only Human" album includes well-loved tunes and originals. Cuts include "And I Love You So," "Summer Breeze," "I Just Can't Let Go," "Iniibig Kita," "Whispering Your Name" and "Human," with "Forevermore" as carrier single.

On Jack TV

See America choose the "Last Comic Standing" on its fourth season at 10 p.m. every Sunday. On "Premium Blend" on Sundays at 11:30 p.m., star comedians introduce promising newcomers. Finally, on "Comedyville" (T-F, 9 p.m.), the funniest sitcoms are showcased—"My Name is Earl," "The Office," "30 Rock" and "Arrested Development."

'Vacancy'

Luke Wilson and Kate Beckinsale star in "Vacancy," a chiller that vivifies travelers' worst nightmare: When their car breaks down on a remote country road at night, the couple is forced to get a room at a sleepy motel—only to discover a cache of "slasher" tapes that look disturbingly real.

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	MR BEAN'S HOLIDAY 1:50 / 3:50 / 5:50 / 7:50 / 9:50	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 12:00 / 3:20 / 6:40 / 10:00	
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX	SHREK 3 12:40 / 4:50 / 9:00	PAANO KITA IIBIGIN 12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50	FANTASTIC 4: SILVER SURFER 11:40 / 2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00

Ali MALL 5

1 FANTASTIC 4: SILVER SURFER 12:50 / 3:10 / 5:30 / 8:10	2 BORDERTOWN 12:00 / 2:10 / 4:20 / 6:30 / 8:40	3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 12:10 R6 / 1:50 / 5:10 / 8:30
4 SILIP 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30	5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN 12:15 R5 / 1:20 / 3:45 / 6:10 / 8:35	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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- 3 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3 — 12:30 3:40 6:50 10:00
- 4 OCEAN'S 13 — 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
- 5 FANTASTIC FOUR — 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
- 6 FANTASTIC FOUR — 12:30 2:30 4:30 6:30
- 7 MEET the ROBINSONS — 11:05 1:20 3:35 5:50
- 8 indieSine: BIG TIME — 1:30 3:45 6:00 8:15
- 9 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN? — 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
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- 3 OCEAN'S 13 — 11:25 2:05 4:45 7:25 10:00
- 4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN? — 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
- 5 FANTASTIC FOUR — 12:00 2:10 4:20 6:30 8:40
- 6 FANTASTIC FOUR — 12:40 2:50 5:00 7:10 9:20
- 7 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3 — 11:15 2:50 6:25 10:00

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- 3 FANTASTIC FOUR — 11:00 1:00 3:05 5:10 7:15 9:20
- 4 OCEAN'S 13 — 1:05 3:35 6:10 9:00
- 5 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3 — 11:30 2:40 5:50 9:00
- 6 BORDERTOWN 11:30 2:40 5:50 9:00 / FANTASTIC FOUR 4:00 6:00 8:00
- 7 FANTASTIC FOUR — 12:30 2:30 4:30 6:30 8:30
- 8 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN? — 1:15 3:50 6:25 9:00

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- 3 OCEAN' 13
- 4 SILIP
- 5 FANTASTIC FOUR
- 6 MEET the ROBINSONS

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- 1 FANTASTIC FOUR — 10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30
- 2 FANTASTIC FOUR — 12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00
- 3 OCEAN'S 13 — 12:25 3:10 5:55 8:40
- 4 MEET the ROBINSONS — 12:10 2:25 4:40 7:05 8:55

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Angelina Jolie talks about Brad, her mom's passing and her rift with dad

...and Yam Laranas casts 'Flags of Our Fathers' star Jesse Bradford in US remake of 'Sigaw'

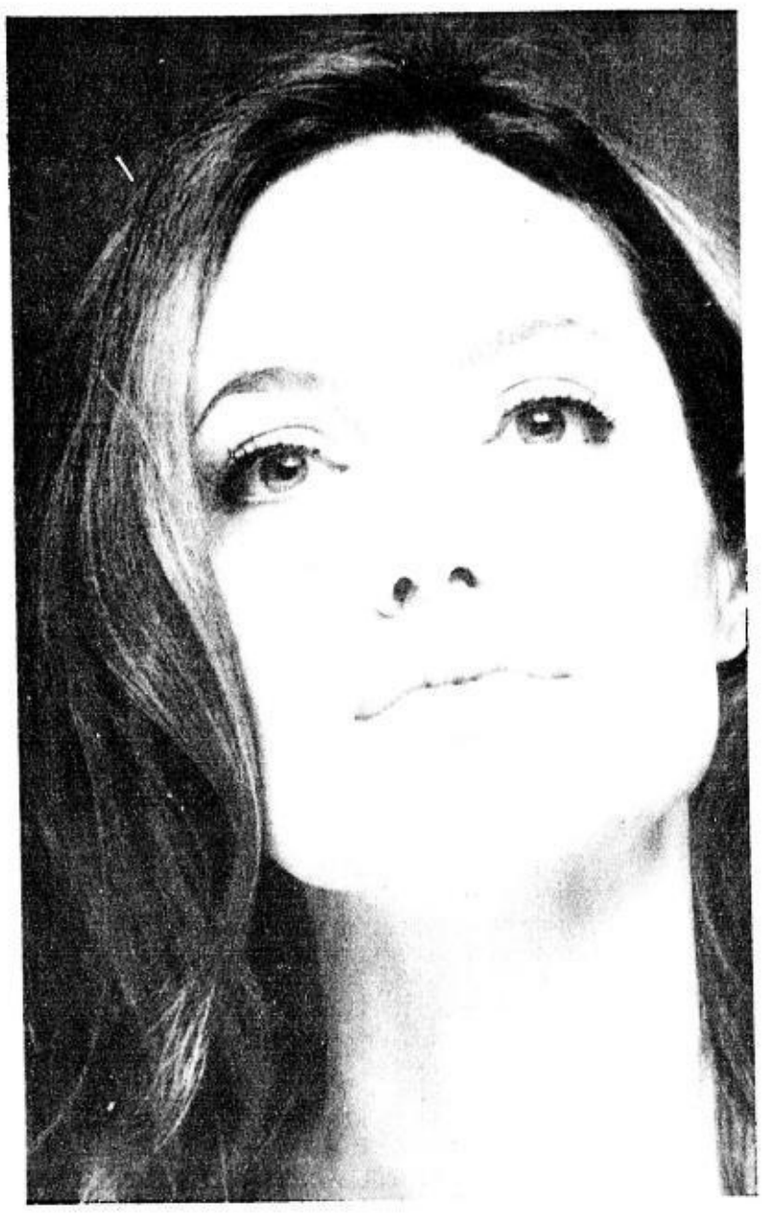
ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—YAM LARANAS CONFIRMED with us that **Jesse Bradford**, he [illegible] in **Clint Eastwood's** "Flags of Our Fathers," has the top role in the US remake of the thriller "Sigaw."

Yam has been in LA since April to prepare the movie, to be titled "The Echo," for production. He told us via e-mail: "We came up with names; Jesse Bradford was unanimously selected. He read the script and liked the character a lot. He asked to see the original and he fell in love with it. Jesse and I had lunch with the producers at the Ammo Cafe in Hollywood. We talked nonstop about the script and his character. I saw how excited he was."

WITH Dan Futterman, who plays Daniel Pearl to her Mariane, in "A Mighty Heart"



The Filipino filmmaker, who has the privilege of directing the Hollywood version of his acclaimed horror film, added, "Jesse is now working out daily—undergoing weight training. He has a nutritionist to help him beef up for the ex-con role. We will definitely see a different Jesse Bradford in 'The Echo.'"

Yam continued: "We have been casting nonstop for the rest of the roles. It's fun to see a lot of very good actors and actresses coming in to audition. *Nakakatuwa kasi nakikita ko lang sila sa* TV *at sine, tapos nasa harapan ko* for an audition. Our casting director is **Nancy Nayor-Battino** ('The Grudge,' 'The Exorcism of Emily Rose,' 'Road Trip'). She is just amazing! She's working with an associate *na* Pinoy but born and raised in Chicago. His name is **John Barba** and his family is from La Union. John is a very efficient caster ('Punch Drunk Love,' 'Shattered Glass'). When you work with Nancy, you get auditions from top agencies like UTA, GERSH, CAA, etc."

And more: "We hope to lock all other actors by early next week. I'm flying out to Toronto on June 23 to start prep for the Aug. 13 start date (of filming). We moved the shoot to Toronto from New York so we can have more shooting days. About 90 per cent of the movie will be shot inside a stage/studio."

A news story of Jesse's casting, titled "Bradford hears chilling 'Echo,'" landed on the front page of The Hollywood Reporter.

Carefree girl

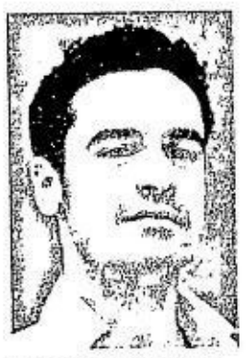
"I blame all of you for that because I was excited," **Angelina Jolie** told our press group with a laugh when a colleague of ours reminded her about the carefree girl she once was, who jumped into the pool after she won a Golden Globe Best Supporting Actress for "Girl, Interrupted" in 1999.

"I think I'm really the same person," maintained the actress who was 23 at the time. Having just turned 32 in this recent press con at the Beverly Wilshire, she was given a bouquet of flowers.

Angelina is not quite that same girl who plunged into the Beverly Hilton's pool in a beaded gown. Since then, Angelina has become a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and, with a passion to aid countries devastated by conflicts and diseases, adopted kids from around the world—**Maddox** (nicknamed Madd), 5, **Zahara** (Zee), 2, and her latest, **Pax**, 3. She has a biological daughter, **Shiloh**, 1, with her partner, **Brad Pitt**.

What has remained unchanged is that Angelina continues to be an excellent actress. The actress' portrayal of **Mariane Pearl**, widow of slain journalist **Daniel "Danny" Pearl**, in "A Mighty Heart," was praised by critics when the film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival last month.

At the Cannes press con for the movie which we attended, Angelina was a forthright interviewee as usual. But in this recent one, when it was more relaxed and we had her for slightly over an hour, she talked more openly for the first time. She did not shirk when asked about: the recent passing of her mother, **Marcheline Bertrand**; how Pax is doing; the rift with her father, actor **John Voight**; and how Brad was as her producer in "A Mighty Heart" and as her partner.



JESSE BRADFORD

There was a catch in her voice as she mentioned Marcheline. She spoke about John in a hopeful tone. She squarely answered a question about her too-thin frame these days. For the fashionista readers, a female colleague supplied us this info: Angelina wore a vintage Moschino embroidered empire-waisted black cocktail dress and black Sergio Rossi high heels and toted a Botkier bag.

How is Brad as producer and as a partner?

I'm a very lucky woman. I have a beautiful family and Brad is a very supportive friend, man and a great father ... and very romantic in his own way. But with this film, I was very nervous because I got to know Mariane and respected her so much. And then having somebody who is your partner as the producer can, in some ways, sound like a good idea but it can also make the pressure higher. I lost sleep over it. But he was very helpful.

Do you and Brad have different ideas about parenting?

We're very similar. We back each other as parents. There is no divide like daddy's okay with this but mommy's not. We never want the kids to see us divided in the way we discipline. He's just as affectionate and loving as I am. I am just as playful. They ride motorcycles and do boy things more than I do. They get dirty in the mud. But we try to make sure they know that they don't divide mommy and daddy, that we agree, we're together, we love each other and from there we have a family.

How does Brad help you in difficult times?

It's funny to give all his secrets away. He's really a great friend... If he's sitting with me and asking how I feel, I feel like he really wants to know. He really cares. We talk very deeply about everything. When my mom passed away, he sat with me ... and helped me through all the stages of handling it—what to deal with, her ashes, everything. He was just wonderful to my brother. I wasn't thinking clearly. He spent the night asking us questions about our mom. He got us to tell funny stories about her, got us focused on all the love and the joy we were fortunate enough to have. He's extraordinary.

How is Pax adjusting to his new family?

He's a great kid. At first, we thought he was shy and quiet. Two days later at home, we discovered that he is the loudest member of the family. He is very athletic, very bold. We don't know if it's because he suddenly had (many forms of) freedom that he never had before. We still have a Vietnamese person around on occasion so he [won't forget] his language. A Cambodian woman is coming to visit Madd. Pax and Zee have connected because they're closer in age. Madd and Pax are brothers; there are times when they absolutely bond against everybody else in the family. They're a tough team. Then they have moments when they bug each other—quite normal.

I'm really proud of Pax. You see certain things from somebody who has been institutionalized ... habits. It's quite obvious that he was used to a stronger discipline. It's hard to change that—to be as strong [but] to just push him with love, by talking to him.

How are Brad's parents with the kids? Do you sometimes leave the kids with them?

Brad's parents are very kind to me, very warm. They're great grandparents. It's very important to me that the kids have that. I don't know if I'd leave these four with anybody right now (laughter). They're a wild bunch. When I first met [Brad's parents], I was coming in with two adopted children from other countries. That was new for them. But they're equally loving. We've left the kids with them quite a few times.

How is your relationship with your father?

I hope that, in the future, it will be more private. Unfortunately, our difficulties became very public—it was not started by me. At the end of the day, we both wish the best for each other. We will try to start communicating in some way. We have communicated through letters. We'll see how far we can go where it's healthy for both of us. I am sure we keep an eye on each other.

You are so thin. Is there a lot of pressure on actresses to be thin?

The funny thing is, when somebody says, you're thin, a person says, thank you. To me actually, when somebody says I'm thin, it is not a compliment. It's not something I want to be. I have always been lean.

This year, I lost my mom. I've gone through a lot. I have four kids. I just finished breast-feeding. It's been hard to get my nutrition back on track and learn about my body after birth. I am doing the best I can. The thing that's disturbing is that instead of somebody saying, oh, this looks like somebody who is dealing with something from emotions—it's, do they want to fit into skinny jeans? I don't encourage young girls to be too thin. I do want people to understand that I am just trying to work through a very difficult year.

(To be continued on Sunday)

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/nepalesreport.

"HAVING your partner as producer can make the pressure higher."

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FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER G 12:50,3:00,5:10, 7:20,9:30	MEET THE ROBINSONS G 12:50,3:05,5:20, 7:35,9:50	FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER G 1:50,4:00,6:10, 8:20,10:30

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INSIDE

Mark Herras' favorite nook /J2

Rita Iringan's pet Shih Tzu/J2

SHAINA has installed a sofa bed in the back of her van, so that she can doze off between takes.

A van of vanities

ON THE ROAD

THE TEEN STAR'S VAN IS PRETTY SELF-contained. There's a sofa bed for resting and portable DVD player, plus a trusty MacBook, to keep her occupied between takes. The spacious van is perfect because debutante Shaina Magdayao never ever travels light. "I bring everything. Good thing it's spacious!" She lugs along tons of costumes, shoes, bags, belts, bangles, and various accessories. She sums up her fashion philosophy in one word: Comfort. Page J4

SHE SURFS the net on her MacBook. These days, she's reading up on Europe.

Book lover's dream bind

By Marinel Cruz
Photos by August de la Cruz

BOUND opened in 2004, with only the books she and three partners donated.

"TO PUT UP A bookstore is every book lover's dream. If only to be around books, I guess," said ABS-CBN anchor person and TV host Bernadette Sembrano.

Ms B is co-owner of the bookstore aptly called Bound.

The store offers previously owned books on politics, economics, current affairs, among others. Bound also sells new age, inspirational books and books for kids.

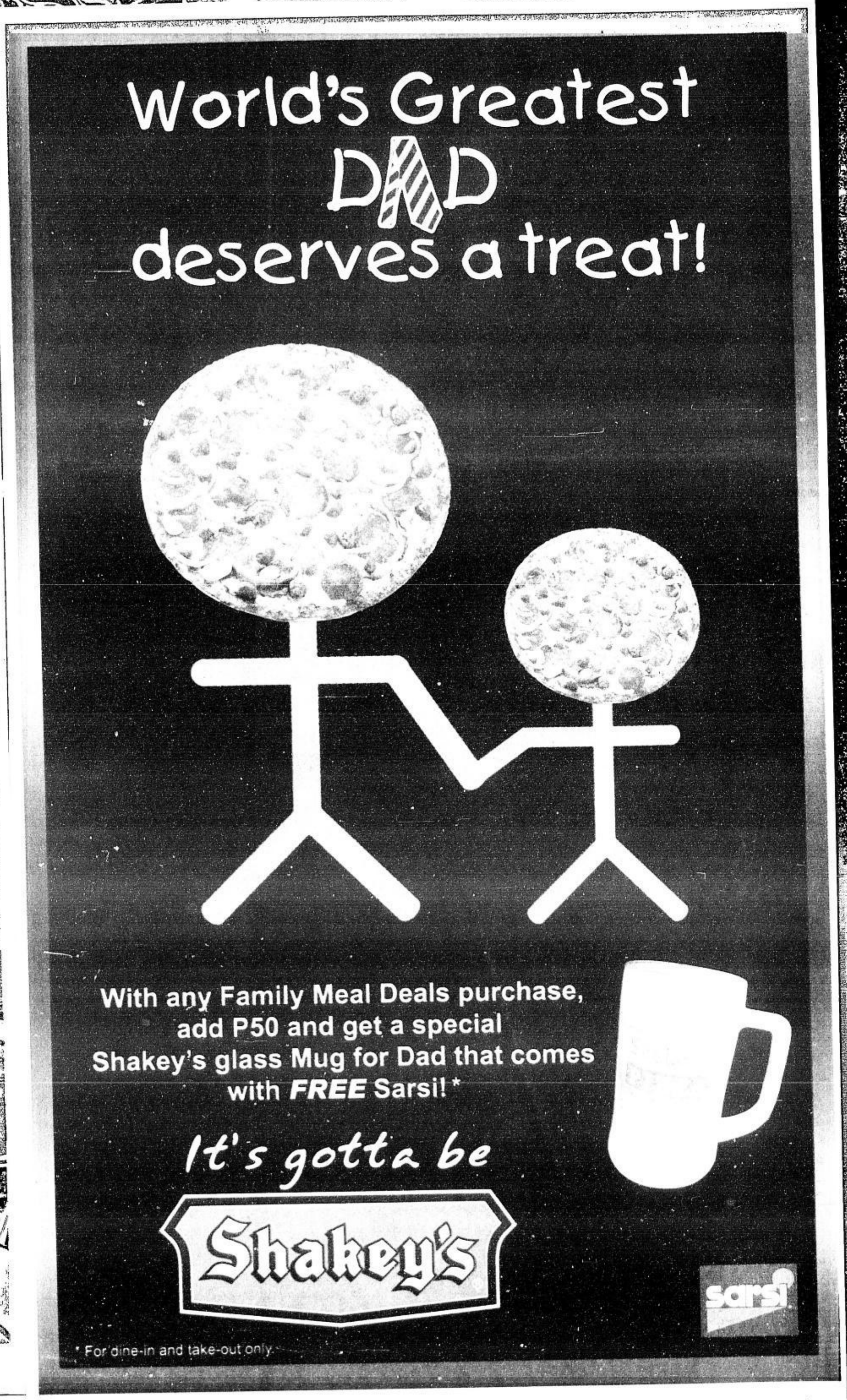
HOBBIES Donated

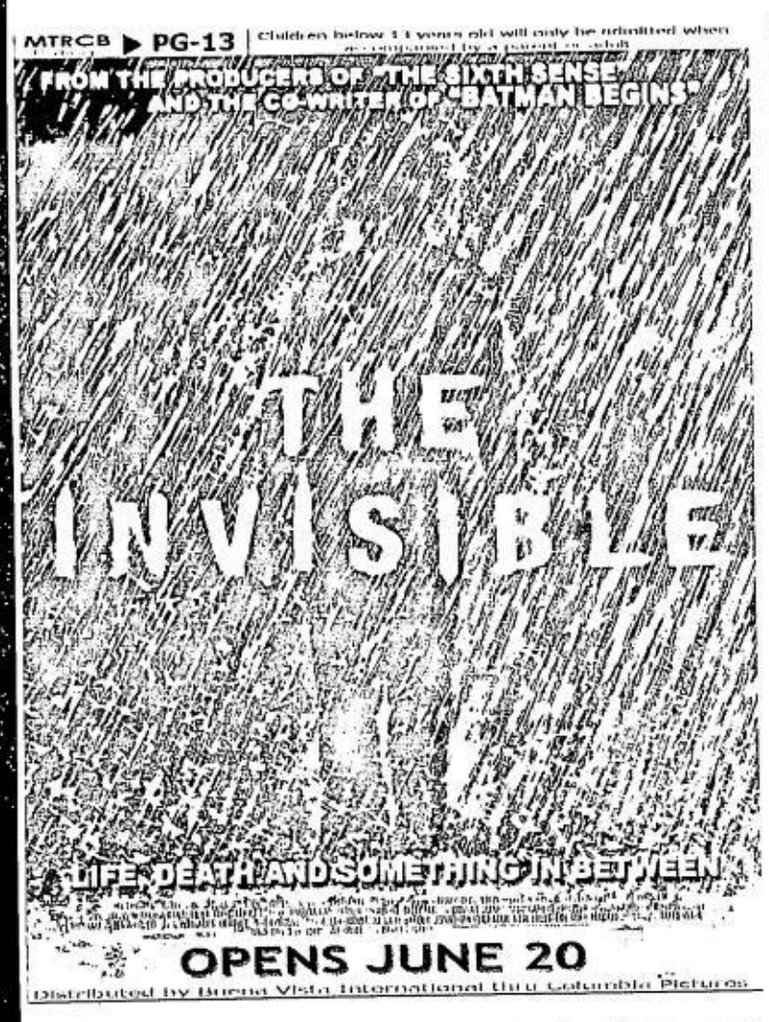
"It started with only the books we donated," Bernadette told Living Stars. By "we," she meant her business partners—journalists Inday Varona-Espina, Carlos Conde and publisher May Rodriguez. "Now we're selling books donated by our customers, too."

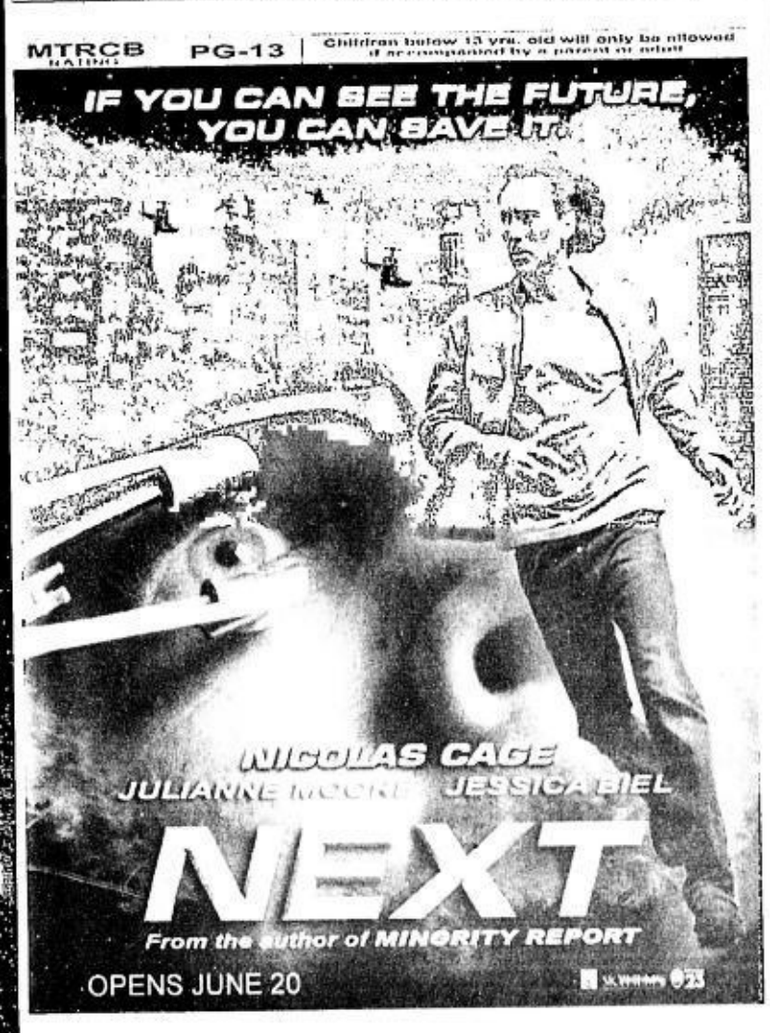
Ms B said a portion of the income generated from Bound goes to the Na-

BOOK/ J2

"ENCOURAGING others to read is people empowerment," says Ms B.







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Gamblers	8:30 pm

June 9 (Saturday)	
Arthur and the Invisibles	1:00 pm
Le Petit Lieutenant	3:30 pm
March of the Penguins	6:00 pm
Brodeuses	8:30 pm

June 10 (Sunday)	
March Of the Penguins	1:00 pm
Not Here to be Loved	3:30 pm
Perfume	6:00 pm
The Ax	9:00 pm

June 11 (Monday)	
Brodeuses	1:00 pm
Not Here to be Loved	3:30 pm
The Ax	6:00 pm
March of the Penguins	8:30 pm

June 12 (Tuesday) (Tribute to Philippine Cinema)	
Pulot & Manoro	1:00 pm
Kaleido	3:30 pm
Masahista	6:00 pm
Masahista	8:30 pm

June 13 (Wednesday)	
The Ax	1:00 pm
Gamblers	3:30 pm
Brodeuses	6:00 pm
Arthur and the Invisibles	8:30 pm

June 14 (Thursday)	
March of the Penguins	1:00 pm
The Ax	3:30 pm
Gamblers	6:00 pm
Fair Play	8:30 pm

June 15 (Friday)	
Not Here to be Loved	1:00 pm
Brodeuses	3:30 pm
Arthur and the Invisibles	6:00 pm
Perfume	8:30 pm

June 16 (Saturday)	
The Ax	1:00 pm
Perfume	3:30 pm
Fair Play	6:30 pm
Gamblers	8:30 pm

June 17 (Sunday)	
Arthur and the Invisibles	1:00 pm
Les Petit Lieutenant	3:30 pm
Not Here to be Loved	6:00 pm
March of the Penguins	8:30 pm

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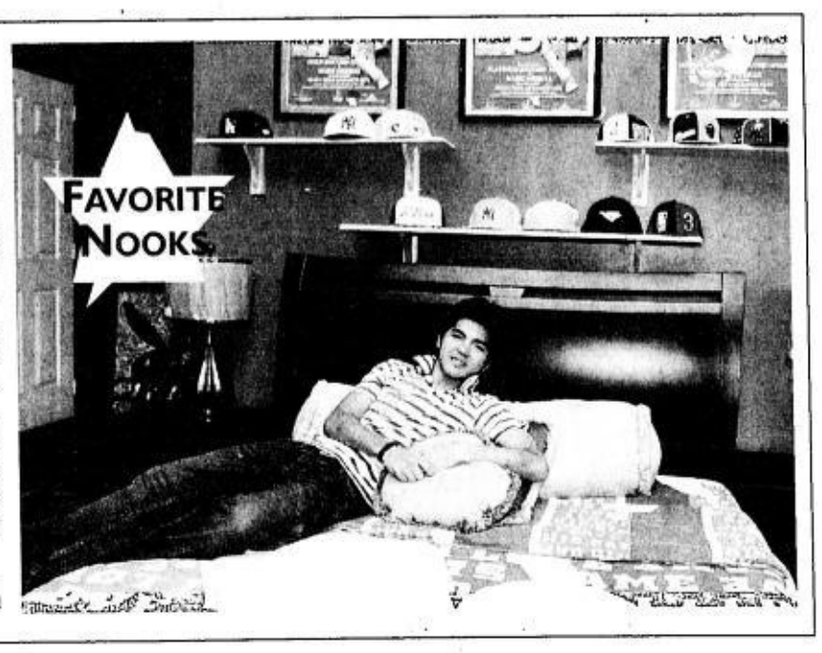
MARK HERRAS



MY FAVORITE NOOK IS MY RED bedroom. I have everything I need here. There's a television set, iPod, personal computer, Xbox, even a mini-refrigerator. I don't need to leave this room to get food and drinks. I also displayed all my favorite things—my collection of caps, sneakers and action figures—here. When I don't have work, I spend the whole day in front of the PC—playing online games and downloading music and movies to my video iPod. Computer games are addicting. I used to spend 12 hours in an Internet café. Good thing I now have Internet connection at home.

Bayani San Diego Jr.
PHOTO BY RODEL ROTONI

GERALD Anderson with mascot Mr. Yum

JURIS of MYMP

RACHELLE Ann Go

CHIN of MYMP

MAFAE Yunon-Belasco

Kiddie Jamboree

LAST MONTH, JOLLIBEE KIDS CLUB members had a field day playing games, watching celebrity performances and posing with mascots at the Jollibee Jamboree at the Music Hall of the SM Mall of Asia.

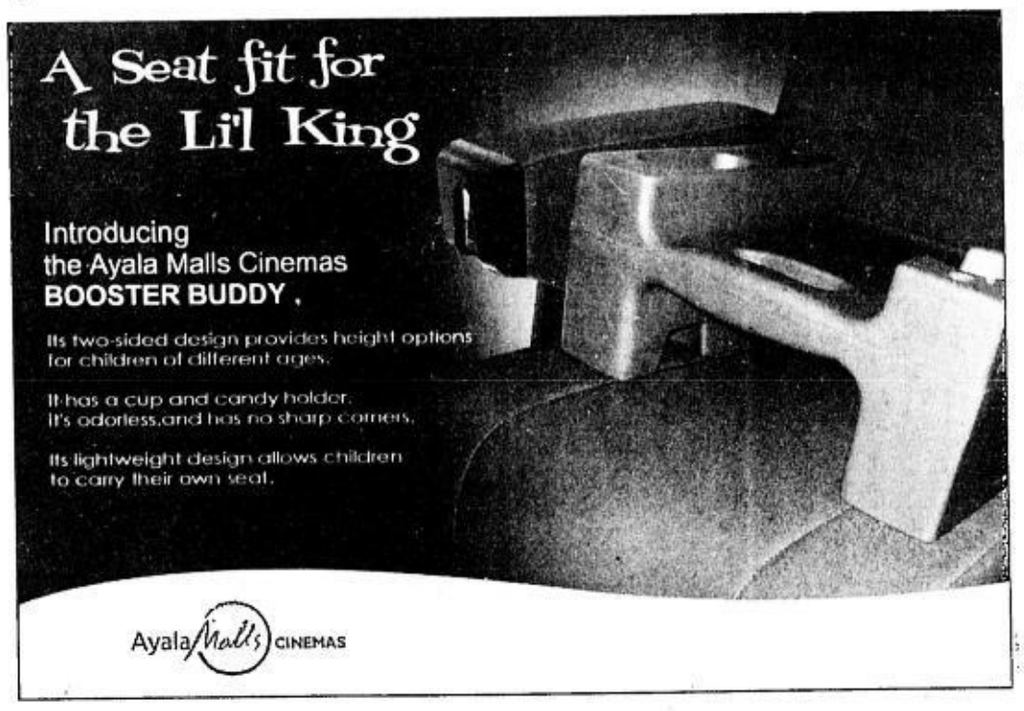
Suzi Entrata and Luis Manzano hosted a show of songs and dances. Performers included Sarah Geronimo, Sam Milby and the "Little Big Star" winners. Kim Chiu and Gerald Anderson came to personally greet the kids.

Concept store

Skechers celebrity endorsers were joined by shoe aficionados when the footwear brand recently inaugurated its concept store at level M2 of TriNoma Mall at North Avenue in Quezon City.

The launch was highlighted by a mini concert at the mall's activity center, featuring performers MYMP and Rachel Ann Go.

Rachel is a Skechers endorser herself, along with youth icon Ashlee Simpson, its current endorser, and pop princesses Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera and American Idol Carrie Underwood.



Callalily sh[illegible] new music

THE BOYS OF CALLALILY—[illegible] Cipriano, Alden Acosta, Tat[illegible] nague, Lemuel Belaro and [illegible] Ricafrente—shot for two da[illegible] ing the making of their "[illegible] (Sony BMG) music video at [illegible] James School in Quezon City. [illegible] directed by Pancho Esguer[illegible] produced by Chris Cahilig C[illegible] tancy.

RITA IRINGAN

MY SHIH TZU KIKAY was a gift from my uncle after I won (as grand champion) on "Pop Star Kids." Every time I'm in the mall, I buy cute costumes, clips, pins and accessories for her. I took her to church last holiday season and she was blessed by the priest. I also turned a polka-dot belt into Kikay's New Year costume. Once a month, we have her groomed in Under the Sea, the shop owned by (composer) Sir Danny (Tan). Kikay sometimes gets jealous when she sees me playing with stuffed toys and other puppies. When I call her, she snubs me! How I wish I could spend more time with her.

TAIL TALES

Bayani San Diego Jr.
PHOTOS BY RODEL ROTONI

Book lover's ...

From page 11

tional Union of Journalists in the Philippines, a group that actively protects the interest of the families of slain journalists.

Advocacy

"I really don't know if journalists should venture into business. This is actually more of an advocacy. We want to make reading more affordable," said Bernadette, who is also host of the documentary show "Nagmamahal, Kapamilya" on ABS-CBN.

Bernadette is also helping ABS-CBN's Gawad Kapamilya put up a children and community library at the Aldaba Hills in Bulacan. "People empowerment is my advocacy. Part of this is encouraging people to read."

"Nagmamahal, Kapamilya," which airs every Saturday afternoon, celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. Bound is located at 105 A Scout Castor, Quezon City.

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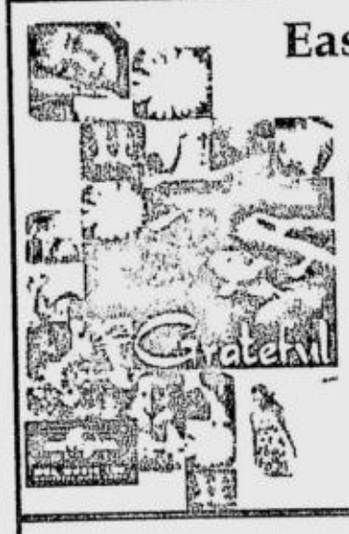

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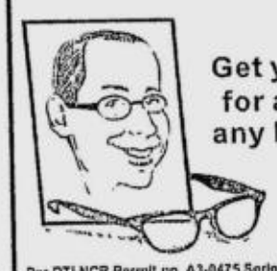

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3	FANTASTIC 4 1:20, 3:40, 6:00 8:20, 10:50 G
4	OCEAN'S THIRTEEN 12:10, 2:45, 5:35 8:25, 11:05 PG-13

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER	2 OCEAN'S 13	3 THX FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN	6 FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER	7 FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 OCEAN'S 13	2 FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 OCEAN'S 13 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER GUARANTEED SEATS	5 FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER GUARANTEED SEATS	
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	3 FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER	4 OCEAN'S 13	5 FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER	
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M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER	2 FANTASTIC 4: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER		
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Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm
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Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
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GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Nestle's Koko Krunch Event June 9 & 10, 2007	Fitness at the Town: Free well-being & invigorating health classes at Cortes De Las Palmas & Town Plaza June 1 to 13, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Maria Flordeluna Mall Tour June 15, 2007	Bazaar! Bazaar! Men's Fair June 4 to 15, 2007

GREENBELT
Mazda Car Exhibit
June 7 to 9, 2007 at GB 1 Lobby

Greenbelt Onstage
ONSTAGE - The perfect spot for concerts, stage plays & coporate events is now accepting bookings for May to July 2007
For bookings, pls. call 752-7862 or 757-3861

Ayala MUSEUM
Embroidered Mutiples: 18th - 19th Century Philippine Costume fr. The Museum Volkenkunde (National Museum of Ethnology), The Netherlands June 4 to July 1, 2007
For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

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Shaina in motion

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by August de la Cruz

FOR TEEN STAR SHAINA MAGDAYAO, HER van, a Toyota Grandia 2006, is a dressing-room-on-wheels.

"I bring everything," she says.

And then some.

She adds: "Soap, shampoo, Lysol, rubbing alcohol, *saka tabo* (plastic dipper)."

Her everyday bag is big enough to accommodate all her stuff. "It's not just for *porma* (being stylish); a bag should be practical."

She gives INQUIRER Entertainment Living Stars a peek into her hefty Cole Hahn tote: there's a wallet, perfume bottle, planner, hairbrush, digital camera, two cell phones, and a *kikay* kit.

Ah, the *kikay* kit ...

"I can never leave home without my rosary, curlash, lip balm, lip gloss, tweezers, and the usual makeup products," she says.

Also in the kit is the Avon Naturals Whitening collection, of which she is the latest endorser.

"I use the complete line—toner, cleanser, day cream. It's important to use a moisturizer—especially since I'm required to wear lots of makeup at work," she points out.

She also lugs along plastic containers of shoes, accessories (lots and lots of belts, bangles and bracelets) and costumes for her different show biz commitments.

"The whole third row of the van is filled with clothes," she says.

Over 20 pairs of shoes can fit in one plastic container.

"I bring different pairs every time, but I usually wear brown or black Zara boots for the UD4 dance portion on [Sunday noontime show] 'A.S.A.P.'," she says.

Good thing the Grandia is spacious: "That's why I chose this vehicle."

For her 18th birthday, though, she is eyeing the latest Honda CR-V. "The CR-V will be for fun; the van, for work."

The van is also a bedroom-on-wheels.

"I had the seats in the last row removed and had a sofa bed installed," she says. The bed is put to good use, she says, whenever she has marathon, *pa-morningan*, out-of-town shoots.

"We usually shoot in Binangonan for the [adventure series] 'Rounin.' Traveling from Manila to Rizal can be tiring. Between takes, I rest and watch movies and TV shows on the portable DVD player," she explains.

Among her fave US shows are "One Tree Hill," "Grey's Anatomy," and "Sex and the City."

"[My best friend] Bea [Alonzo] and I just started watching 'Sex and the City.' When we were younger, we didn't get the jokes. But now we're hooked," she quips.

Her MacBook is a dependable companion on the road.

Shaina's the computer whiz in the family and big sister Vina Morales once ran to her for help because "she needed to e-mail someone."

These days, she often surfs the Net, researching on Europe.

"When Bea turned 18, we went to Singapore. For my 18th birthday [on Nov. 6], we are planning to tour Europe. It will be my first time so I want to visit Ibiza, Amsterdam, Paris."

Home network ABS-CBN is keen on mounting a grand coming-out party for her.

"But I don't want it to be traditional. Nothing formal or stiff for me. I want my debut to be fun and unique."

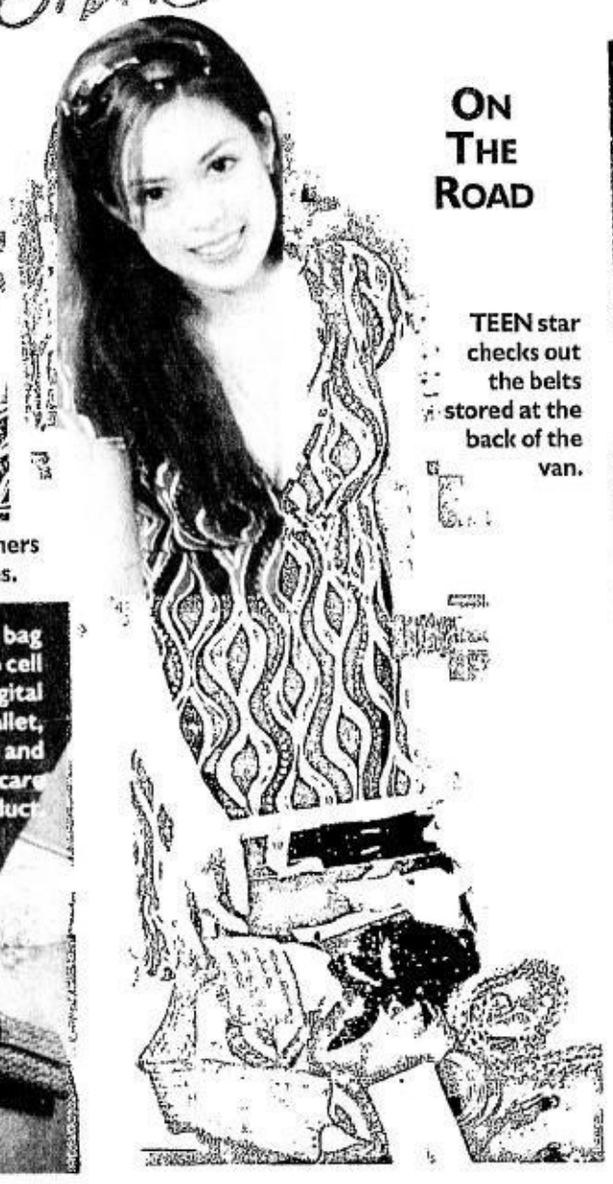
She's a practical gal, after all.

"It's unreasonable to spend P1.5 million on a party that will only last one night. I'd rather travel to Europe and enjoy memories of the trip forever."

Constantly rushing from one set to another, the teen star says everything she needs is in this grey van

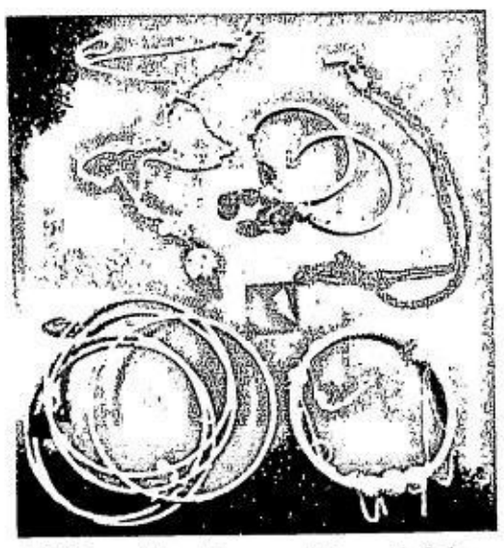
UNDER her "bed" are plastic containers filled with belts, accessories and shoes.

COLE Hahn bag contains two cell phones, a digital camera, wallet, hairbrush and a hair-care product

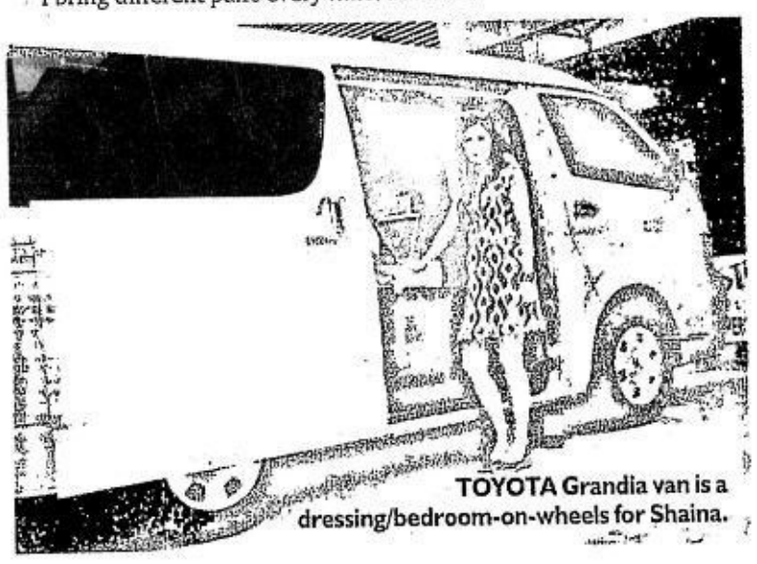


ON THE ROAD

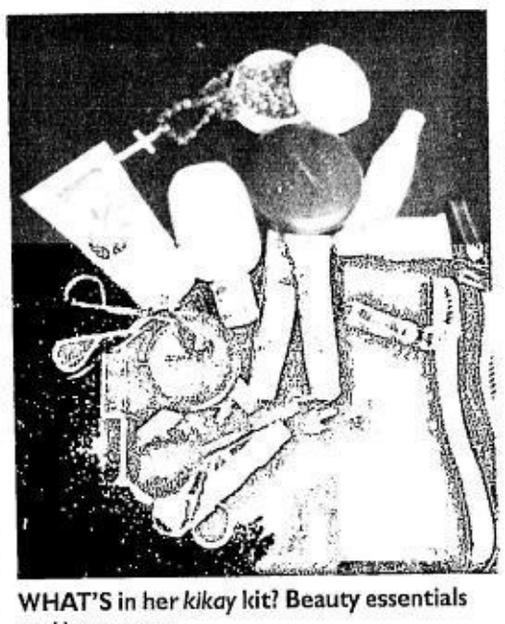
TEEN star checks out the belts stored at the back of the van.



SHE IS partial to Mango and Kenneth Cole accessories because they're stylish and durable.



TOYOTA Grandia van is a dressing/bedroom-on-wheels for Shaina.



WHAT'S in her *kikay* kit? Beauty essentials and her rosary.

OVER 20 pairs of shoes are stored in the plastic container—a favorite brand is Nine West.

Promo Mechanics:

1. There are two ways of joining the M&M's® Enchanted Getaway promotion:
   A. The first one is through SMS using mobile phones:
      a. Consumer buys specially marked packs of M&M's® Chocolate Candies (Milk, Peanut, Peanut Butter, Crispy or Minis) from participating establishments. Each pack will have a sticker with a unique alphanumeric raffle code printed on it.
      b. To join the promo, text MMSHREK RAFFLE CODE and send to 2366 for Globe, Kapamilya Sim, Touch Mobile, Sun Cellular, Smart, Addict Mobile and Talk & Text Subscribers. P2.50 will be charged per text message sent to Globe, Kapamilya Sim, Touch Mobile, Smart, Addict Mobile and Talk & Text subscribers. P2.00 will be charged for Sun Cellular subscribers.
      c. To validate your entry, you have to register once by texting MMSHREK REG NAME/AGE/GENDER/ADDRESS and send to 2366. Registration is free of charge.
         Example:
         To send entries: MMSHREK3 B5678
         To register: MMSHREK REG John Reyes/30/M/234 Ruby St. Makati City
      d. M&M's® Chocolate wrappers with the stickers must be kept and shall be presented for verification purposes in order to claim the prize.
   B. The second one is through mail:
      a. Consumer purchases any pack of M&M's® Chocolate Candies (without sticker) and mails the empty wrapper to: Master Foods Philippines, Inc.
         11th Flr., Tower 1, The Enterprise Center, Paseo de Roxas cor. Ayala Avenue, Makati City 1229
2. Promo will run from May 15 to July 31, 2007.
3. Total prizes: a 6D/5N stay in a castle in Europe (France) for 4 people, 100 units Apple I-pod Shuffles 1 GB and 20 units Sony Playstation Portable.
4. Draws dates: Minor Draw on July 2, 2007
   - 50 winners of Apple iPod Shuffle (1GB)
   - 10 winners of Sony Playstation Portable

   Grand Draw: August 3, 2007
   - 6D/5N stay in a castle in Europe (France) for a group of 4
   - 50 winners of Apple iPod Shuffle (1GB)
   - 10 winners of Sony Playstation Portable
5. All entries are cumulative. Non-winning entries will qualify for the succeeding draws. The more entries sent the more chances of winning.
6. Cut-off dates for the minor draw is on July 1, 2007 at 11:59pm. For the Grand Draw, cut-off will be on July 31, 2007 at 11:59pm.
7. Draws will be held at the ABS-CBN Interactive office in the presence of a representative from BFAD, ABS-CBN Interactive and Master Foods Philippines, Inc.
8. Winners will receive a call with accompanying instructions on how to claim their prize. For those who joined through SMS, they must be prepared to surrender the M&M's® Chocolate wrapper with the winning raffle code. Damaged altered and/or tampered stickers, as well as wrappers with no promo sticker and vice versa will be disqualified and rendered invalid. For those who mailed their entries, they must present 2 valid identification cards as proof that they are the rightful winners.
9. Verification procedures will be enforced to ensure validity and authenticity of the promo sticker and wrapper or the identification cards. Representatives from BFAD and Master Foods Philippines Inc. will conduct the verification procedures.
10. Verified winners will then be eligible to claim their prize.
11. Prizes are non-transferable and may not be converted to cash except for the grand prize. Cash equivalent of the package trip to Europe is PhP 500,000.00.
12. All prizes are tax paid.
13. Children under 13 years old are not eligible to join the promo.
14. All employees of Master Foods Philippines Inc, Duty Free Philippines and their agencies and third party partners, Click Licensing, and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity and affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.

Biofuels, anyone?

AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION PHILIPPINES AAP SINCE 1931

Clean-burning fuels are now available in a gas station near you

LOST IN THE EXCITEMENT OF THE DAYS LEADING to last month's election was the first day of implementation of the landmark Biofuels Law. It was May 6, 2007, a Sunday, when without much fanfare, gas stations in the country began selling diesel with 1-percent biofuel blend.

Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) welcomes this dawning of a new era of cleaner fuels in Philippine motoring. From hereon, Filipino motorists can load up with clean-burning fuels, help conserve the environment and boost the country's campaign to achieve energy independence.

The Department of Energy (DOE), the agency tasked to monitor the oil industry's compliance with the Biofuels Law, says May 6 proceeded smoothly, with oil firms keeping prices unchanged. Energy Secretary Rafael Lotilla initially wanted the implementation of the law deferred, thinking that Filipinos might be too distracted by the elections. But thankfully, the law took effect as scheduled.

Under the Biofuels Law, all gas stations are required to sell diesel with a minimum of 1-percent coco methyl ester or B1 within three months after the law is signed. These same stations are given another two years to make available gasoline with 5-percent bioethanol (E5) blend.

This early, however, two oil companies - Seaoil and Shell - are already selling gasoline blended not only with 5 percent but 10 percent bioethanol (E10).

Selective Shell

It was only the second company to sell E10 in the country, but it was the first to make a lot of noise about it.

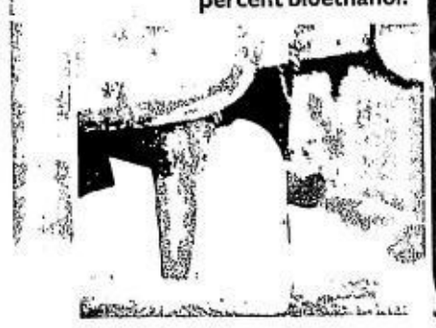
Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp began selling its Super Unleaded E10 at four of its stations last year. It now sells the biofuel at 39 stations in Metro Manila and is reviewing plans to make the product available at a total of 100 stations within the year.

Shell country chair Edgar Chua said sales volumes for this "fuel of the future" have been "good" but he declined to give figures.

Chua said motorists who load up on biofuels should be proud of themselves because they are doing their bit to reduce air pollution and help the country save on much needed foreign exchange.

Anticipating the huge demand for E10, Shell is putting up its own ethanol processing plant in Negros Occidental which is expected to be ready before the year ends.

BIOFUELS/ K2



SINCE May 6, all gasoline stations in the country have started selling diesel with 1-percent biodiesel blend. Come 2009, all will be selling gasoline with at least 5-percent bioethanol.

At a glance

How oil firms are complying with the Biofuels Law

On B1 or 1% biodiesel blend

All gasoline stations nationwide now sell B1 under different brands. Prices vary depending on trading area, with freight and degree of competition as major factors. Thus, prices are higher in rural areas and lower in urban areas.

On E5 or 5% Bioethanol blend

Seaoil has been selling its G5 Extreme E10 (gasoline with 10 percent bioethanol) in all its stations since last year. Seaoil's E10 is 30 to 50 centavos cheaper per liter than the premium gasoline of other companies.

Shell began selling its Super Unleaded E10 in four stations last year and has now expanded to 39 stations. Shell's E10 is 50 centavos cheaper per liter than its own regular unleaded gasoline.

Petron Corp has decided to wait for local bioethanol production to pick up before selling E5 or E10 gasoline since the Biofuels Law provides a two-year compliance period for the mandate to sell the 5 percent bioethanol blend. Other industry players are doing the same.

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Biofuels, anyone?

From page K1

Aggressive Seaoil

Homegrown oil company Seaoil is the most aggressive in the industry when it comes to biofuels. Considered a minor player in the industry, it has positioned itself as the first "Biofuels Major," being the first to secure an import permit for bioethanol from Brazil and the first to offer both E10 gasoline and B1 biodiesel at all its stations nationwide.

Seaoil president Glenn Yu said the company wants to "fuel the change" in Philippine motoring by introducing cleaner fuels at cheaper prices. Its G5 Extreme E10 is 30 to 50 centavos cheaper than other oil companies' equally graded premium gasoline with no ethanol blend.

"Seaoil is embarking on an education campaign to promote the benefits of biofuel use to motorists, both young and old. We have started supporting the Philippine Touring Car Championships to show that E10 is the best fuel for car racing and we are coming up with a website to provide young people with information on biofuels," he said.

Seaoil marketing officer Rey Jimenez added that there is a huge need to educate jeepney drivers on engine maintenance so as to maximize the benefits of clean fuels, especially biodiesel. When Seaoil launched its B1 called BioXceed last month, it offered free emission tests to motorists and many jeepney drivers were somewhat expecting that the black soot from their vehicles would be instantly eliminated.

"Many jeepney drivers thought that biodiesel was a magic potion that could stop smoke-belching. But we told them that to minimize it, a combination of proper engine maintenance and regular use of clean fuel is needed," Jimenez said.

Flying V: Focused on biodiesel

Another homegrown oil firm, meanwhile, is focusing its resources solely on biodiesel.

Flying V just marked its 10th year in the business and now prides itself as the first to sell B1 biodiesel.

The B1 biodiesel pioneer, Flying V is now testing a higher blend of coco methyl ester with the assistance of the Technological University of the Philippines (TUP).

Flying V chair Ramon Villavicencio said a blend of 20 percent biodiesel or B20 is being extensively tested. If successful, the product will be test-marketed at Flying V's Biofuel Center in Quezon City and at TUP's campus in Taguig.

Petron complies with B1 mandate

Industry leader Petron Corp has fully complied with the government's 1 percent biodiesel (B1) requirement and is preparing to sell ethanol-blended gasoline at its more than 1,000 stations all over the country.

Petron president Khalid Al-Faddagh has been requesting the government for a one-year transition period for the implementation of the Biofuels Law, citing logistical requirements as well as technical and safety issues.

"Time is needed to get the system ready. It's not just the logistical side of it that we're working on. There are still uncertainties on the supply side that need to be addressed," he said.

Al-Faddagh said Petron has already allotted P269 million for new tanks and pipes for the storage and delivery of biofuels.

In previous interviews, he stressed that local production of bioethanol is the only way the Philippines can benefit fully from the Biofuels Law.

This is why Petron signed a deal last year with Negros-based San Carlos Bioenergy to buy the latter's entire ethanol production beginning in 2008.

Petron is also looking at the non-edible shrub jathropa to replace coconut as a more sustainable source of biodiesel.

Petron supplies 38.8 percent of the country's 52 million barrels of oil products every year.

Three Hyundai Models Named Best-In-Segment in Strategic Vision 2007 Total Quality Index

Hyundai Motor Company produced the most segment leaders of any automotive manufacturer, according to Strategic Vision's Total Quality Index™ (TQI), which measures total vehicle satisfaction among new car owners. Achieving the top slot in three distinct vehicle segments is a first for Hyundai. The Strategic Vision results released recently placed the Hyundai Azera sedan atop the large car segment, the Entourage (tied with the Kia Sedona and Nissan Quest) in the top spot for the minivan segment and the Santa Fe on top in the small sport utility vehicle (SUV) segment.

"Hyundai's success in 2007 is not surprising given its current products, as well as its leadership team who is looking strategically to the future with new designs from styling to powertrain," reports Dr. Darrel Edwards, founder and CEO of San Diego-based Strategic Vision.

The Hyundai Santa Fe beat out competitors such as the Toyota FJ Cruiser and Jeep Wrangler 4-door for the top spot. The Hyundai Entourage minivan, which tied for first with the Kia Sedona and Nissan Quest, beat out the Honda Odyssey for the top slot, a position held by the Odyssey for the last five years.

"The Strategic Vision Total Quality Index demonstrates that Azera, Entourage, and Santa Fe are high-quality vehicles with terrific appeal," said John Krafcik, vice president of Product Development and Strategic Planning. "At Hyundai we stand for great design, quality, safety, and outstanding value… and these study results show that consumers love this recipe."

The Total Quality Index is the measurement of new vehicle owner satisfaction. The Strategic Vision poll surveyed more than 27,000 vehicle buyers who bought 2007 models in September, October and November of 2006. Consumers were asked an array of questions about their ownership experience, including buying, owning and driving their new vehicles. The Index 2007 results were based on ratings of new vehicle owners in 19 product categories.

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Making motoring fun

By Gus Lagman, AAP President

On road safety, again!

READERS OF THIS SUPPLEMENT AND OUR NEWSLETTER DRIVE MAY have noticed by now that my favorite topic has been road safety. I believe we cannot talk enough about ways to make roads safer, especially when we are told that some 1.2 million people get killed-and 50 million get injured-in road accidents every year.

This is why the United Nations, through the World Health Organization (WHO), has made road safety a priority concern. Realizing that road accidents is a global killer comparable to AIDS, WHO has come up with a worldwide program to educate people of all ages on road safety.

The lead agency for this program is the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) which has as affiliates all national auto clubs in the world, including our very own AAP. FIA Director General Peter Doggwiler and FIA Secretary for Region 2 Greg Hunting are coming to Manila this month to discuss the latest developments in this program.

Having spearheaded the campaign for road safety for two years now, AAP has a lot of things to report to the FIA. In 2005 and 2006, we conducted a series of Road Safety Conferences in coordination with the University of the Philippines National Center for Transportation Studies (UP-NCTS) and Toyota Motor Philippines Corp.

We have also put up the first and only Road Safety Call Center in the country to facilitate quick response to reported road hazards. Following the example of the Subic Bay area, we are working with UP-NCTS to make the UP Diliman campus a model road safety campus. This will be launched during UP's centennial celebration in 2008.

Only recently, we began a training program for drivers of public utility vehicles with the support of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) and UP-NCTS. This project was made possible by the enthusiastic support of LTFRB Chair Tom Lantion. Starting with taxicab drivers, the training program aims to educate as many PUV drivers as possible-including those driving trucks, buses and jeepneys - with emphasis on traffic regulations and road courtesy, which are the very foundation of road safety. The program will run year-round. Toyota is donating P1 million to turn the National Driving Academy classroom in UP into a state-of-the-art driver's training center.

On top of all this, AAP is also participating in FIA's iRAP (International Road Assessment Program) to make roads safe and thereby save lives. We all know how badly designed some of our roads are, how the lack or absence of clear road signs and markings increases the risk of accidents. We can do with some assistance from road safety experts.

As I said, I really cannot talk enough about road safety, what with all these activities happening concurrently. I just hope our efforts will not be in vain and will result in less accidents and more order on our roads. With your help, I know this can be achieved.

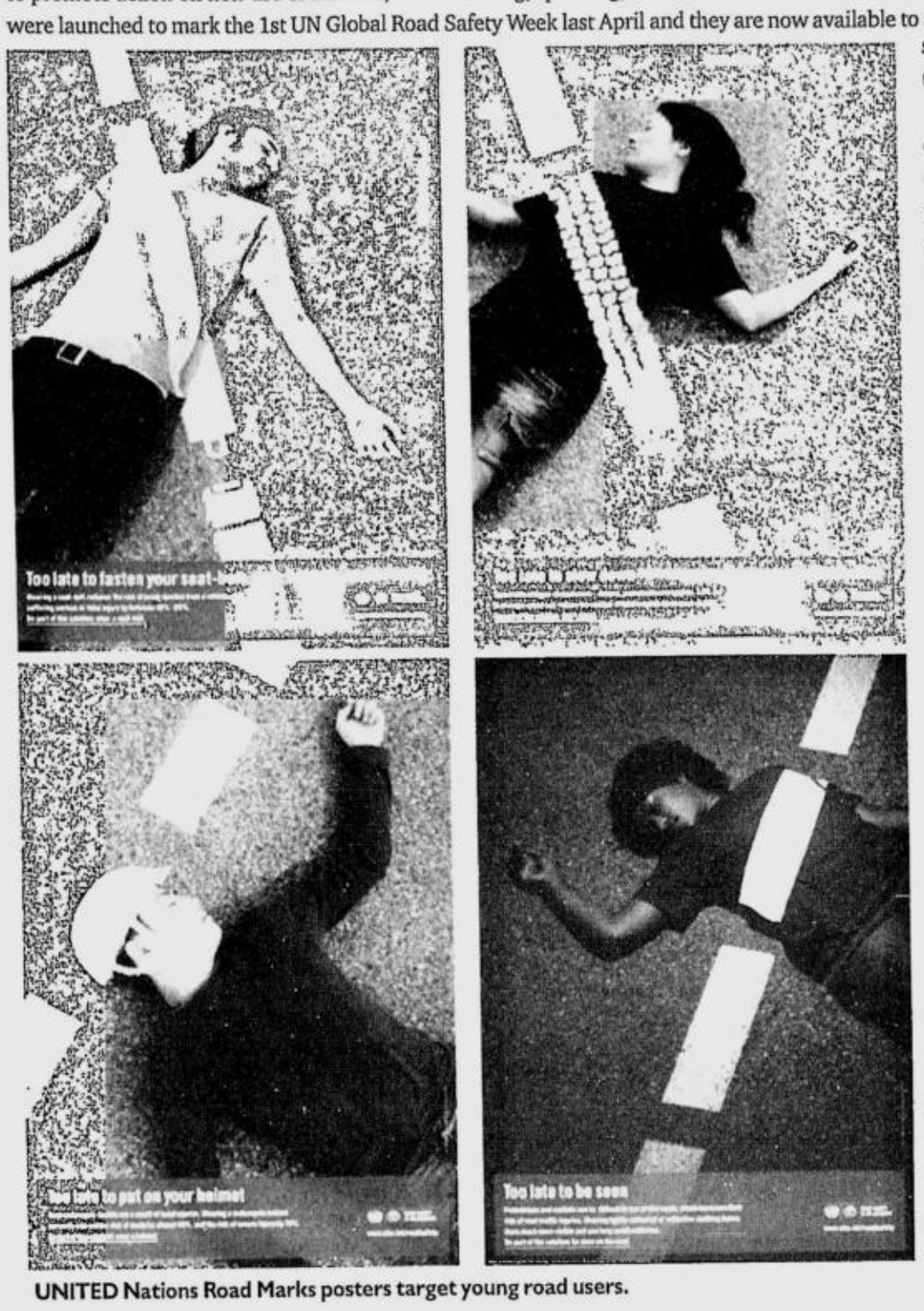
Correction, please

Let me make some clarifications about some items in my column last March. The price of the AAP battery is not 30 percent cheaper, but still substantially lower than other brands. And even though we offer insurance products to our members at very competitive rates, AAP is not an insurance broker as yet. For questions, comments or suggestions, e-mail info@aap.org.ph

Happy motoring!

WHO unveils Road Marks posters

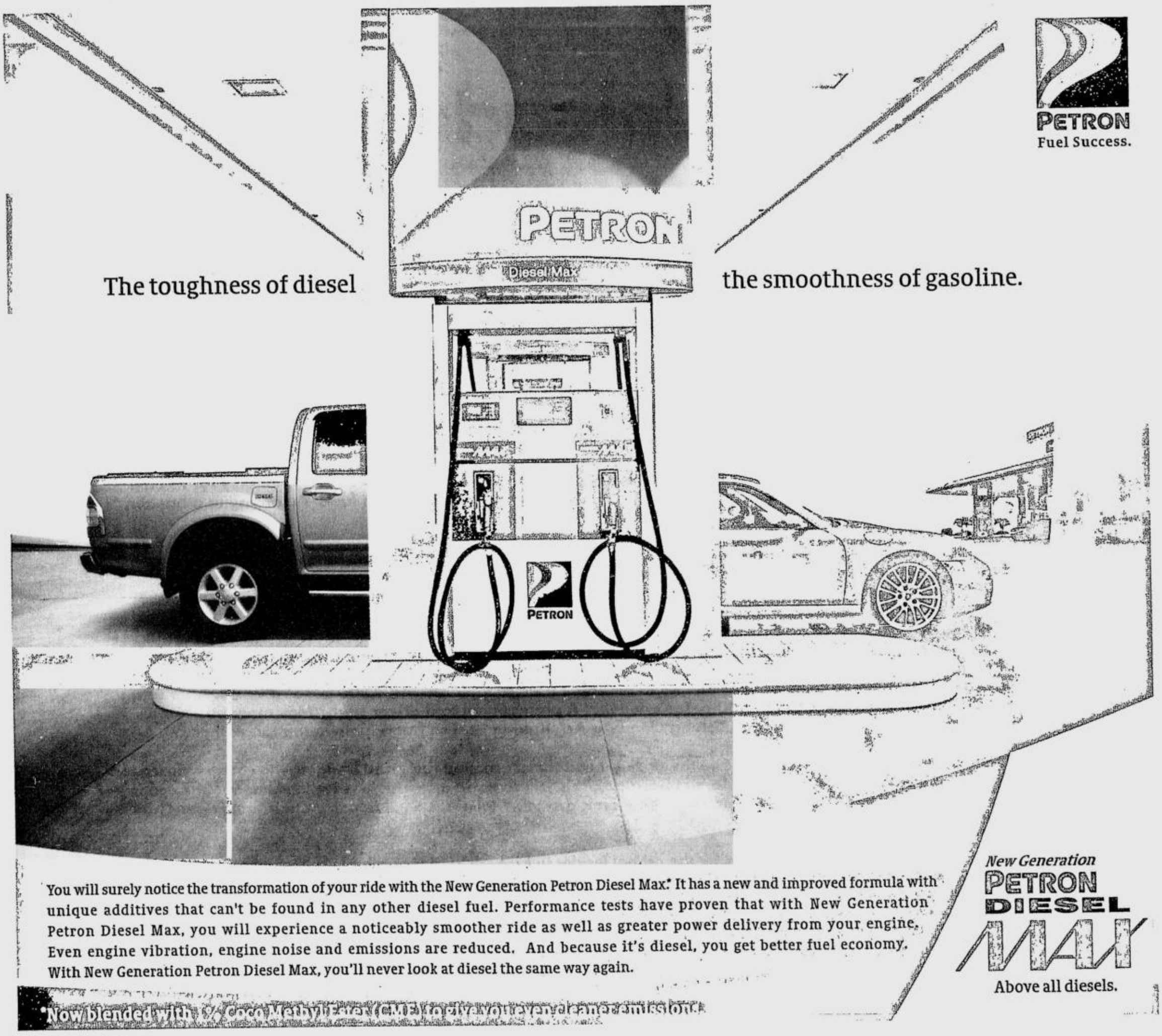
THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) HAS UNVEILED A "ROAD MARKS" SERIES OF FIVE POSTERS, CREATED to promote action on non-use of helmets, drunk-driving, speeding, seatbelt non-use, and visibility problems. The posters were launched to mark the 1st UN Global Road Safety Week last April and they are now available to all who organize road safety events around the world.



UNITED Nations Road Marks posters target young road users.

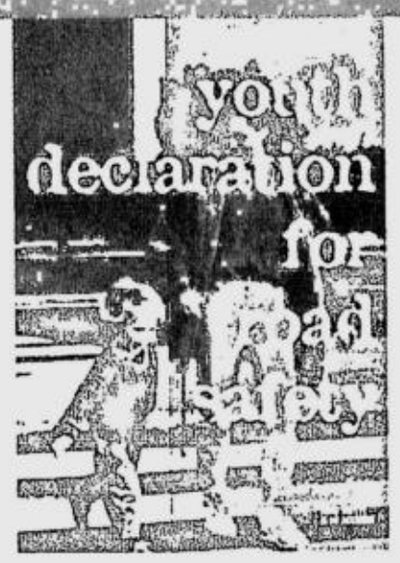
More than 40 percent of all road traffic deaths occur among people aged 0 to 30 years. The UN Global Road Safety Week has therefore been dedicated to young road users-pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, novice drivers and passengers. The key global event was the World Youth Assembly for Road Safety (see story) which motivated delegates to do more for road safety. The posters illustrate their call to action and invite young people to be part of the solution: wear a helmet, never drink and drive, don't speed, wear a seatbelt and be visible on the road.

Groups interested in making use of the posters for their road safety campaign may request high-resolution files by sending an e-mail to traffic@who.int.



World's youth meet on road safety

THE Youth Declaration for Road Safety and the Philippines' only delegate, Vic Rosales.



EVERY 27 SECONDS SOMEwhere in the world, someone dies in a road accident. And there is a 40-percent chance that the victim is under the age of 30.

Young people from over 100 countries met in Geneva, Switzerland last April 23 and 24 to work together to minimize these preventable fatalities.

In what was called the Youth Declaration for Road Safety, 400 delegates to the 1st World Youth Assembly vowed to take practical measures to improve road safety in their respective countries and to call upon other young people to do the same.

Vic Rosales, the Philippines' only delegate to the event, presented the country's initiatives to make roads safer.

A student of Ateneo de Manila and a core group member of the Road Safety Youth Council organized by Ford Philippines, Rosales proudly told the assembly of the Philippines' efforts to engage the youth in creating awareness on the importance of road safety.

"In making a program for the youth and by the youth, we hope to better propagate the lessons of road safety while serving as role models to our family and peers," he said in his report published on the Internet by Autoindustriya.com.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon of Korea gave the opening address of the conference and talked about the impact of road accidents on the economies of nations.

Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General of the World Health Organization, meanwhile, spoke of the need for planning to safely accommodate all road users, including bikers, motorcyclists and pedestrians.

Jacques Barrot, Vice President of the European Commission on Transport, noted two things needed for road safety-infrastructure and attitude. He stressed that safety must begin from the day a road or a car is designed and must continue all the way to the day that the right attitude toward road safety is developed in every road user.

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who was also present during the assembly, emphasized the importance of road safety in developing countries-where over $100 billion are spent yearly on alleviating road injuries.

Other speakers in the conference included musician Moby, crash survivor Bright Oywaya who was paralyzed from the neck down, and Peter Geszti, who had a relative who perished in a road accident.

Speaking towards the end was Formula One driver Alex Wurz who presented a video of his Formula car crashing at 300kph. Though he walked away from the crash unscathed-thanks to modern technology-he told his young audience that racing is not a reckless sport and that road safety is "cool".

"Never race on the road. If you want to race, do it on a race track," he stressed. Delegates presented various projects to promote road safety to their fellow youth.

One project, implemented in Australia, involved a breathalyzer test in bars and pubs, with those who failed being given stickers that said, "I'm drunk, can you take me home?"

Wristbands were also extensively used in many countries as they appeal to young people and are a lot cheaper than traditional advertisements. Messages on the wristbands included "Don't Drive Tired" or "Use Your Head - Wear A Helmet!"

There was also a global film competition and a Voices of Youth creative writing contest to encourage young people all over the world to express their views on road safety.

The climax of the conference came on the second day when the delegates were taken to the garden to release 1,049 white balloons, representing the number of young people who die every day from road accidents.

WHO Director Etienne Krug said that starting this year, the third Sunday of November shall be a day of remembrance of these young people's deaths.

DELEGATES to the World Youth Assembly for Road Safety release 1,049 balloons symbolizing the number of young people being killed on the world's roads every year.

Shell
Super Unleaded

More and more motorists choose Shell's Super Unleaded E10

Pilipinas Shell has always been committed to developing fuels which address the needs of motorists, thereby producing quality products which allow its customers to go further for less. With over 70 years of fuels innovation and consistent customer commitment, Pilipinas Shell was the first major oil company to launch its ethanol blended gasoline, Shell Unleaded E10, last May of this year.

Shell Super Unleaded E10, which is a safe, proven, and tested alternative to current fuels in the market, burns cleaner and helps complete combustion. It is not only good for the car's engine but also for the environment. The Ethanol blend helps reduce the harmful content in gasoline (benzene and sulfur), thus enables motorists to contribute to a cleaner and greener environment. The move towards alternative fuels is in support of the Philippine Government's Bioethanol Program.

More and more Filipino motorists are experiencing the benefits of Shell's Super Unleaded E10 – not only for its environmental benefits, but also because of it being a cost effective alternative to premium fuels. According to a banker, "I like using E10 because it's easy on the pocket and easier on the environment."

On top of it being an affordable alternative, it is also good for your car's engine and performs just as well as premium fuels. "I've noticed improved combustion in my engine. This of course led to a smoother ride and better acceleration," a car enthusiast commented. A banker added, "I get the same performance, but of course, for less."

Not only is Shell's Super Unleaded E10 good for your car, but it is also good for the environment. A Sales and Marketing professional, likewise commented that she chooses E10 because of the added benefit the fuel has for the environment. Likewise, a private motorist added, "I personally choose E10 for my car because it is cheaper and better for the environment. Using my daily route of Quezon City to Makati, I used to tank around 1,000 pesos a week. After using E10, I have been able to cut it down to 800 pesos a week." A professional taxi driver said, "Mas maganda kung lahat tayo gagamit, makatulong sa pag-push ng Clean Air Act. Kulang kasi sa pagpapaliwanag tungkol dito."

"Shell Super Unleaded E10 is our response to the arising need for alternative fuels and bringing the country closer to reducing dependence on imported fuels. More importantly, this will expand opportunities for livelihood in the countryside that can contribute to the nation's sustainable economic growth," Pilipinas Shell Country Chairman Edgar Chua said.

Shell Super Unleaded E10 is manufactured by the global leader in biofuels and is available to motorists in thirty Shell Stations within Metro Manila. Shell targets a total of forty to fifty stations by end of this year to meet the growing demand of its loyal customers.

Available in the following Shell Station in Metro Manila: Kalayaan Ave.,cor. Makatarungan St., Q.C., Sucat Road, Parañaque ; E. Rod. Judge Jimenez, Q.C.; Don Mariano Marcos Ave., Don Antonio, Q.C.; 20th Ave., cor. P. Tuazon, Cubao, Q.C.; 184 Katipunan Rd., Proj. 4, Blueridge, Q.C.; Magallanes Village, South Super Highway, Makati City; CAA Road Pulang-lupa II Las Piñas; McArthur Highway, Tinajeros, Malabon; Old National Highway, Tunasan, Muntinlupa; 1942 A. Linao St., Paco; Naga Road cor. DBP Subd. Road, Pulang-lupa, Las Piñas; Ortigas Ave. Ext., Kaytiking, Taytay, Rizal; 282 JP Rizal St., San Roque, Marikina City; 131 Boni Ave., cor. P. Cruz St., Mandaluyong City; Visayas Ave., Proj 6, Q. C.; JP Rizal St., Guadalupe, Makati City; J. Abad Santos/Rizal Ave., Ext., Tondo, Manila; F. P Felix Ave. cor. London St., Cainta Rizal; Shaw Blvd., cor. Mabini St., Mandaluyong; Circumferential Road, Antipolo, Rizal; Amang Rodriguez, Santolan, Pasig; Quirino Hi-way, Dona Amparo Subd., Caloocan City; Santolan cor. Marcos Hi-way, Pasig City; Araneta Ave. Brgy. Tatalon, Q.C.; Quirino Hi-way, Baesa, Q.C. ; Del Monte Ave., cor. Talayan, Q.C.; Susano Road cor. Edon St., Novaliches, Q.C.; Gen. Luna, Ampid, San Mateo, Rizal; West Service Road, Cupang, Muntinlupa; Kamias Rd. Cor. Kasing-Kasing, Diriman, Q.C.; Ortigas Ave., Ext. cor. Doña Juliana St., Rosario, Pasig; South Triangle EDSA, Quezon City; Pres. Quirino ave., Paco; EDSA cor. Gil Puyat; Pasong Tamo cor Herrera Street

Drift or climb hills, take your pick

TWO NEW EVENTS ARE THE talk of Philippine motor sports today, both of which remind us of rally driving and require less investment in time and money.

Drifting and hill-climbing were introduced almost at the same time and both now have their respective championship series.

Let's take a look at each of these sports.

Drifting

Drifting is when the rear of the car appears to be chasing the front. In rally driving in the '70s, it was called the Scandinavian flick whereby the driver, with quick turns of his steering wheel and a pull of his handbrake, flicks the rear of the car as he enters a curve for a faster exit.

As a sport, drifting is more like stunt driving and competitors are judged by how difficult and how artistic their maneuvers are. In the words of Alex Perez, last year's drifting champ and this year's series leader, what the drifters do is "put a car out of control in the most graceful and fastest way possible."

Since the sport is fascinating to watch, drifting events easily draw crowds by the hundreds on weekdays and by the thousands on weekends.

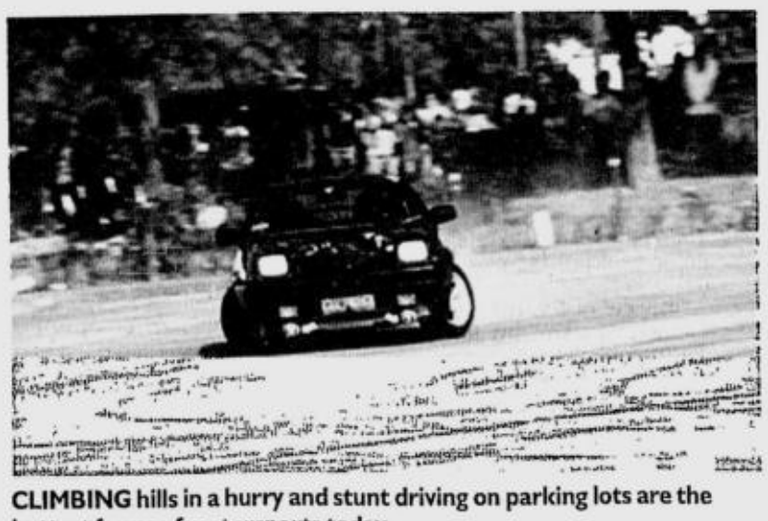
Charlie Cruz, operations chief of the Lateral D Championships, the national event for drifting in the country, says the sport is growing fast, attracting participants of all ages. "Our youngest participant started at 12 and is now 13 years old while our oldest is 54 years old and is a vice president of San Miguel Corp," he said.

Cruz and two other drifting enthusiasts - Mon Rayos and David Feliciano - were among those who wowed the crowd at the Mall of Asia in a 2005 event to promote the movie Tokyo Drift. Last year, however, the three decided to concentrate on running the events and make sure they were done safely and promoted well.

Lateral D events are now regularly held at the parking lot of the CCP Bayview Terminal in Pasay City. There, drifters do their thing without worrying much about safety as foam barriers protect the turns. The venue also has eight cameras so every detail of the action is captured.

Beginning July, Lateral D will have a wider TV exposure with Solar Sports airing 30 minutes of drifting action once a month, which is great news for drifters and their sponsors.

In case you want to learn drifting, there is a DMF Drift School owned by Feliciano at the corner of Katipunan Avenue and Boni Serrano street in Quezon City where - for P12,000, all in - you can learn the basics of handbrake turn, clutch kick and other fancy car moves. Fees are lower if you use your own car. Just one reminder: You need a rear-wheel drive car with manual transmission to drift. And don't forget to bring a helmet. Please text 0928-5024352 or call (02) 697-0014 for details.



CLIMBING hills in a hurry and stunt driving on parking lots are the hottest forms of motorsports today.

Drifting is not sanctioned by AAP at present since it is not yet recognized by the FIA, the Paris-based organization that governs motor sports worldwide. However, at the FIA Asia Zone meeting in Singapore this week that AAP motor sports committee chair Mandy Eduque attended, member countries agreed to recognize drifting and create a set of rules for it.

Eduque said Malaysia has been tasked to draft the rules which are expected to be approved by member countries by yearend. "When that is done, next season AAP can sanction drifting events - or D1 as they are called in Japan," he said.

Hill-climbing

Hill-climbing, on the other hand, is a motor sport where drivers compete against the clock to complete an uphill course. It is one of the oldest forms of racing, with the first known hill climb held as early as 1897 in Nice, France.

The sport usually provides good spectator access as it is done on hills. Though very competitive, hill-climbing has a friendly atmosphere similar to rally driving and attracts men and women of all ages. Cars used in the competition range from road-worthy saloons to sports cars, single-seat race cars and even historic (vintage) cars.

Blue Reyna, president of the Hillclimb Club of the Philippines, says if you are looking for a sport that combines some of the best aspects of autocross, rally and road racing, then hill-climbing could be for you.

"It's very much like autocross except that the pylons are made of boulders and trees and going off course poses more serious consequences," he said.

So far, three hill-climbing events have been held this summer, with competitors divided into three groups, depending on their proficiency. In the premier Group 3, Carlos Anton, a multi-awarded race driver from Baguio, ruled the first two events to emerge as overall champion. Those interested in hill-climbing may call the HCCP secretariat at (02) 833-8386. Their next series is being planned for February 2008.

As a sport, drifting is more like stunt driving and competitors are judged by how difficult and how artistic their maneuvers are. In the words of Alex Perez, last year's drifting champ and this year's series leader, what the drifters do is 'put a car out of control in the most graceful and fastest way possible'

Taxi drivers get training from AAP

THE LAND TRANSPORTATION Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has started a program to improve the skills and attitude of public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers in the country.

Implemented with the help of the Road Safety Partners in the Philippines, namely Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) Toyota Motor Philippines (TMP) and UP National Center for Transportation Studies Foundation Inc (NCTSFI), the PUV Drivers Training Course initially benefited 44 taxi drivers from different companies in Metro Manila through a seminar last June 5 to 7.

LTFRB Chair Thompson Lantion said the program realizes the agency's vision to promote professionalism among PUV drivers.

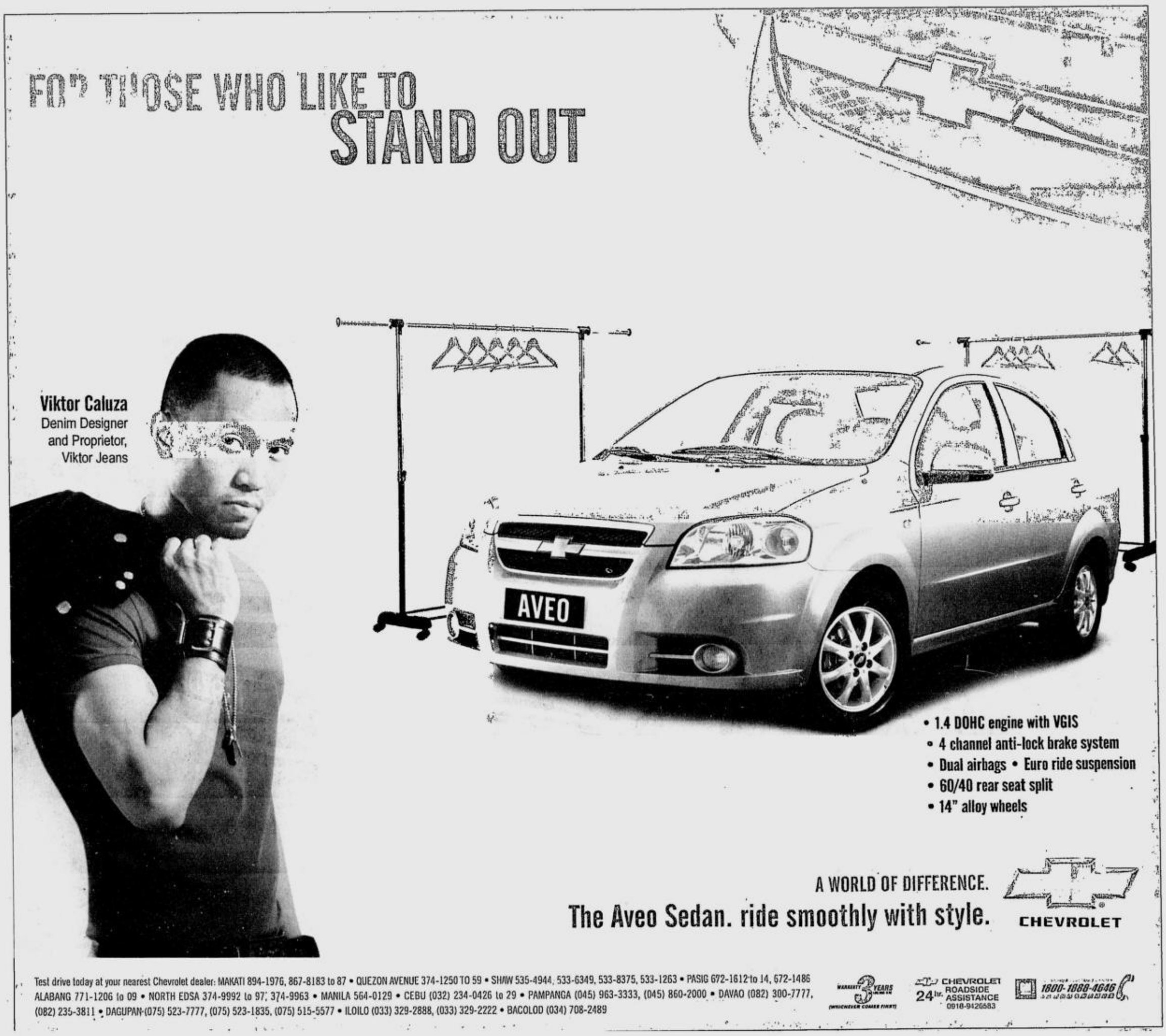
The seminar assessed the driving skills of the participants via a driving simulation test using specialized equipment from AAP. Instructors were experts from UP-NCTSFI.

Representatives from the Department of Health and Philippine National Red Cross provided some inputs on first aid in road accidents.

Lantion said the LTFRB plans to hold the training once a month to give more PUV drivers-including those driving school buses-the chance to attend.

Transport operators themselves requested the seminar to improve the skills of their drivers. These operators even gave their drivers allowances to compensate for their loss of earnings during the three-day seminar.

The seminar was free of charge.



Coming soon: UP Diliman as the first Road Safety Campus

THE SPRAWLING CAMPUS OF THE University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City will soon become a model for road safety.

Automobile Association Philippines, the UP National Center for Transportation Studies, Toyota Motor Philippines and 3M Philippines have joined hands to make UP Diliman the first Road Safety Campus in the country.

AAP vice president Johnny Angeles said the UP NCTS has already finished its study on how to improve traffic within the UP Diliman Campus.

"The study, with all its recommendations, will pave the way for a Road Safety Campus Model in the Philippines," he said.

The NCTS study assessed the existing traffic conditions in the campus and designed an efficient traffic circulation system to ensure smooth, safe, and environment-friendly vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian flow. It also identified traffic management measures appropriate for the campus to reduce traffic congestion.

The study has four components-traffic and road safety, non-motorized transport, parking and public transport.

The traffic and road safety component focuses on traffic management, traffic control devices, information dissemination and enforcement of traffic rules and regulations.

The non-motorized transport component, on the other hand, includes bicycle lanes and walkways and gives priority to the enhancement of pedestrian and non-motorized modes of travel within the campus.

As for parking, the UPNCTS suggests two options - a central terminal for all jeepneys or smaller terminals near the Katipunan side or near the University Avenue area.

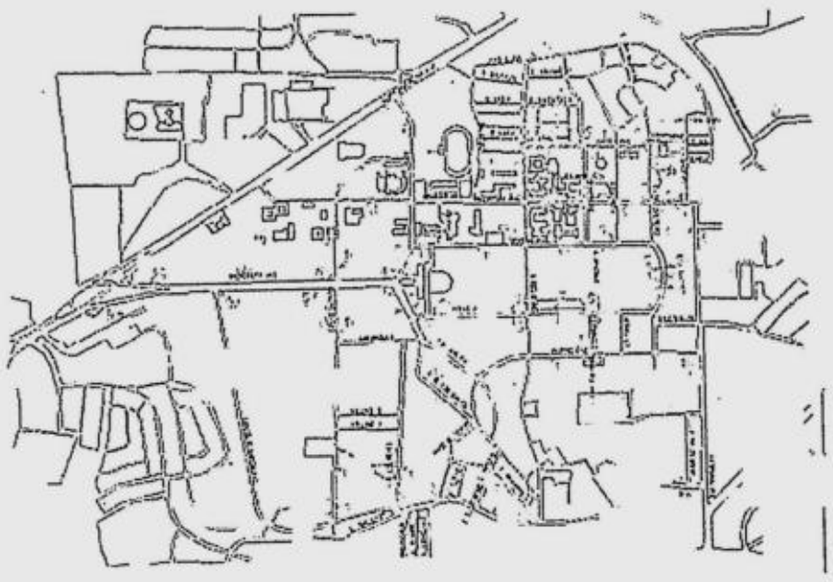
For the public transport component, it was decided that jeepneys are still the best mode of transport going in and out of UP Diliman. However, the study suggests that improvements such as the use of cleaner fuels, the retirement of dilapidated jeepneys, and the retraining of drivers be implemented.

In his letter to Dr. Cynthia Grace Gregorio, UP Vice Chancellor for Community Affairs, Angeles said that AAP is now ready to put up modern traffic signs inside the UP Diliman campus at no cost to the university.

"In cooperation with our road safety partner, 3M Philippines, traffic and safety signs that conform with international standards will be installed to improve pedestrian safety and vehicular control," he said.

Angeles added that reflective pavement markings would be laid out around the UP oval to establish lanes for motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

"In view of the UP Centennial celebration that starts this June, we would like to commence the implementation of these works at the soonest possible time," he added.



STREET map of UP Diliman

Renew your AAP membership the easy way

MEMBERSHIP IN THE AAP CAN NOW BE easily renewed, thanks to new technology.

Necy Zornosa, AAP membership services manager, said those with expired or expiring memberships may just call the AAP and renew it over the phone, using their credit card to pay. Those with mobile phones subscribed to Globe and Touch Mobile can pay via the G-Cash electronic system.

Those wanting to pay in cash can do so at all Bank of the Philippine Islands and Banco de Oro branches.

Zornosa, however, cautioned AAP members against entertaining calls from strangers reminding them of their supposed expired membership in other clubs that also offer free towing services. She advised AAP members to simply disregard these calls, or if they have time, report these calls to AAP.

For inquiries, text 0918-812-6000/0917-812-6000 or call the AAP hotline (02-723-0808).

More discounts for AAP members

CARD-CARRYING AAP MEMBERS CAN now avail of discounts from the following new AAP partners:

8 percent discount on LPG conversion kits: Ace LPG Philippines Inc. No. 4988 Barangay San Dionisio, Dr. A. Santos Avenue, Parañaque City. Tel. 788-0500.

10 percent discount on labor for general body repair, painting, mechanical and electrical works and 5 percent on spare parts: Eucar Service Center, No. 5 Sto. Tomas Street, Barangay Don Manuel, Quezon City. Tel. 413-7232

5 percent discount on repair services: Ford Davao, Km 6 Lanang, Davao City. Tel. (082)234-1111.

20 percent discount on accommodations and 10 percent discount on use of the spa: Davao Crown Regency Residences, JP Cabaguio Avenue, Agdao, Davao City. Tel. (082) 225-8188.

Beware of fake international driving permits

FILIPINOS PLANNING TO DRIVE IN OTHER COUNtries can do so with an international driving permit (IDP). But they should secure an IDP only from Automobile Association Philippines (AAP). An IDP issued by any other organization is fake.

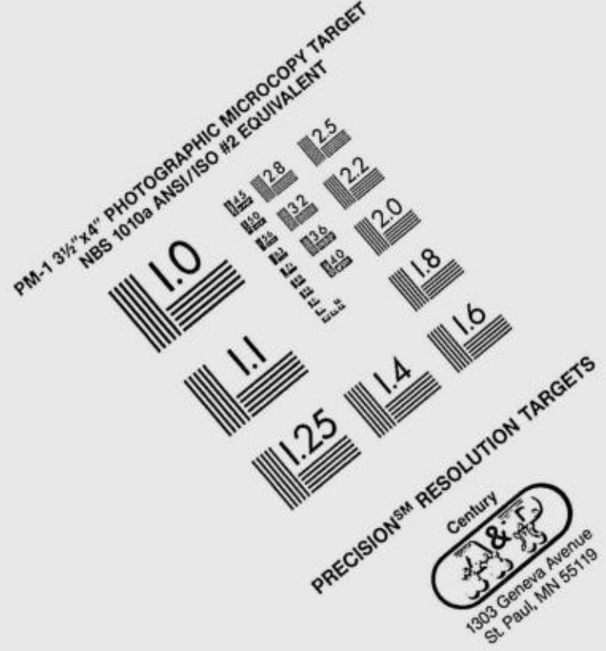
As the country's national auto club, AAP is the only institution authorized by the government to issue a Philippine International Driving Permit (PIDP) honored in most countries except Taiwan, Communist nations, and some areas of Japan.

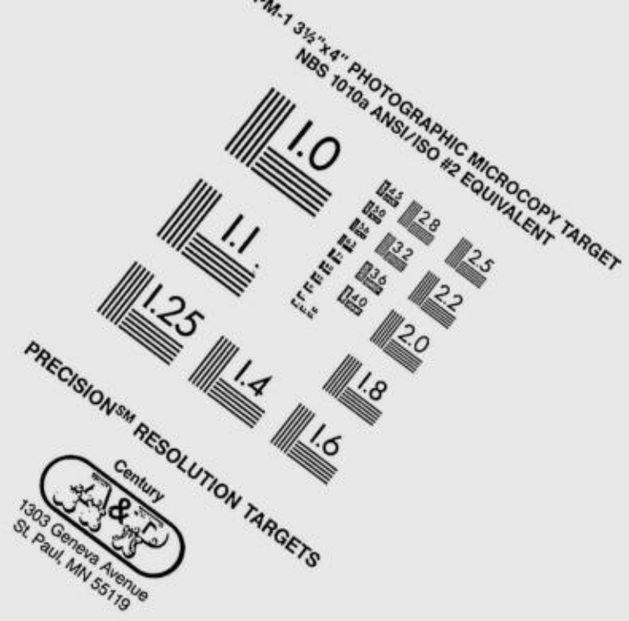
The IDP issued by AAP to AAP members costs only P200 while fake ones cost as much as P5,000. If you are not an AAP member, the IDP costs P1,200 but this includes your payment for a one-year AAP membership which carries with it free towing services, LTO registration assistance, P300,000 personal accident insurance and a host of other benefits including reciprocal services given by automobile associations in the countries you visit.

To obtain an IDP, bring your LTO driver's license and two size 2x2 ID photos (color with white background) to any AAP office in Quezon City, Makati, Alabang, Cebu or Davao.

If you are in a hurry, proceed directly to AAP's main office at 883 Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City, between Broadway and Gilmore streets. It takes only 30 minutes to one hour for the processing of an IDP at AAP's main office. At AAP's Makati and Alabang offices, next working day and in Cebu and Davao extension offices, processing takes two to three working days.

A word of caution: A fake IDP may get a driver into serious trouble abroad. Penalties range from stiff fines to imprisonment or deportation. So if you want to be 100-percent sure that your IDP is genuine, go to AAP.





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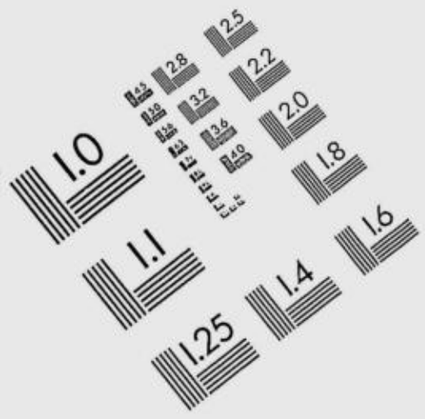

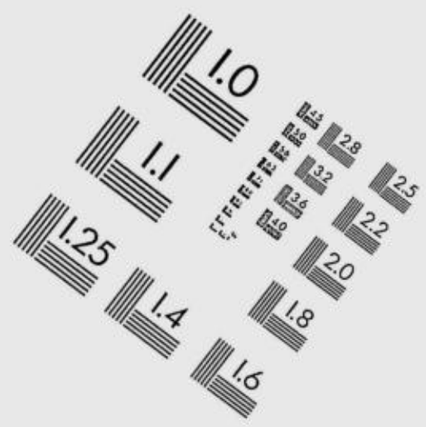

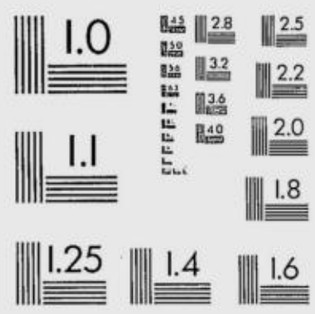

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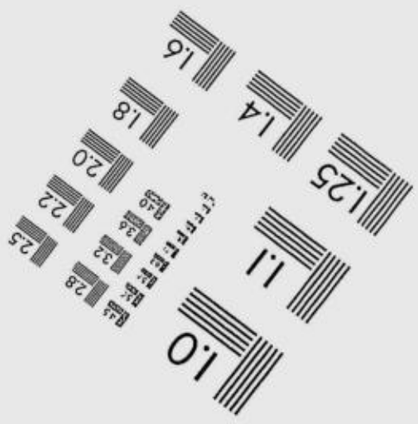

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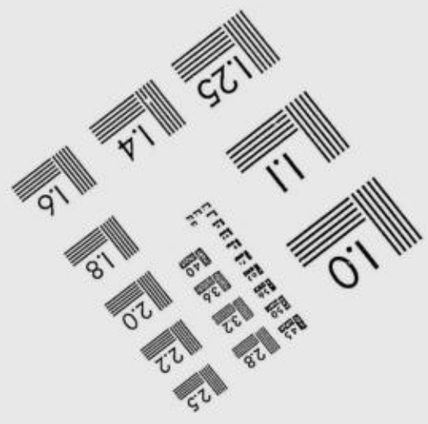

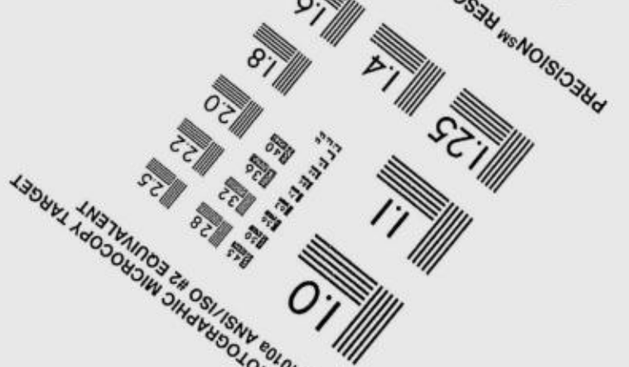

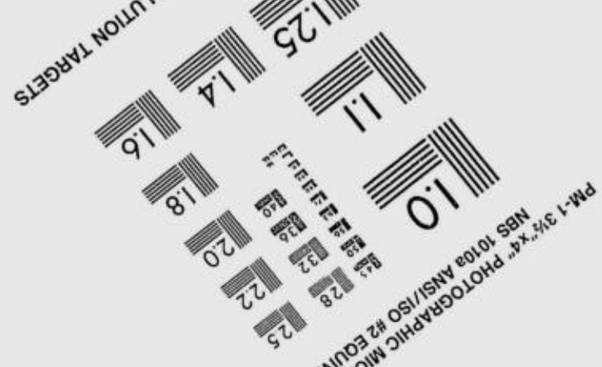

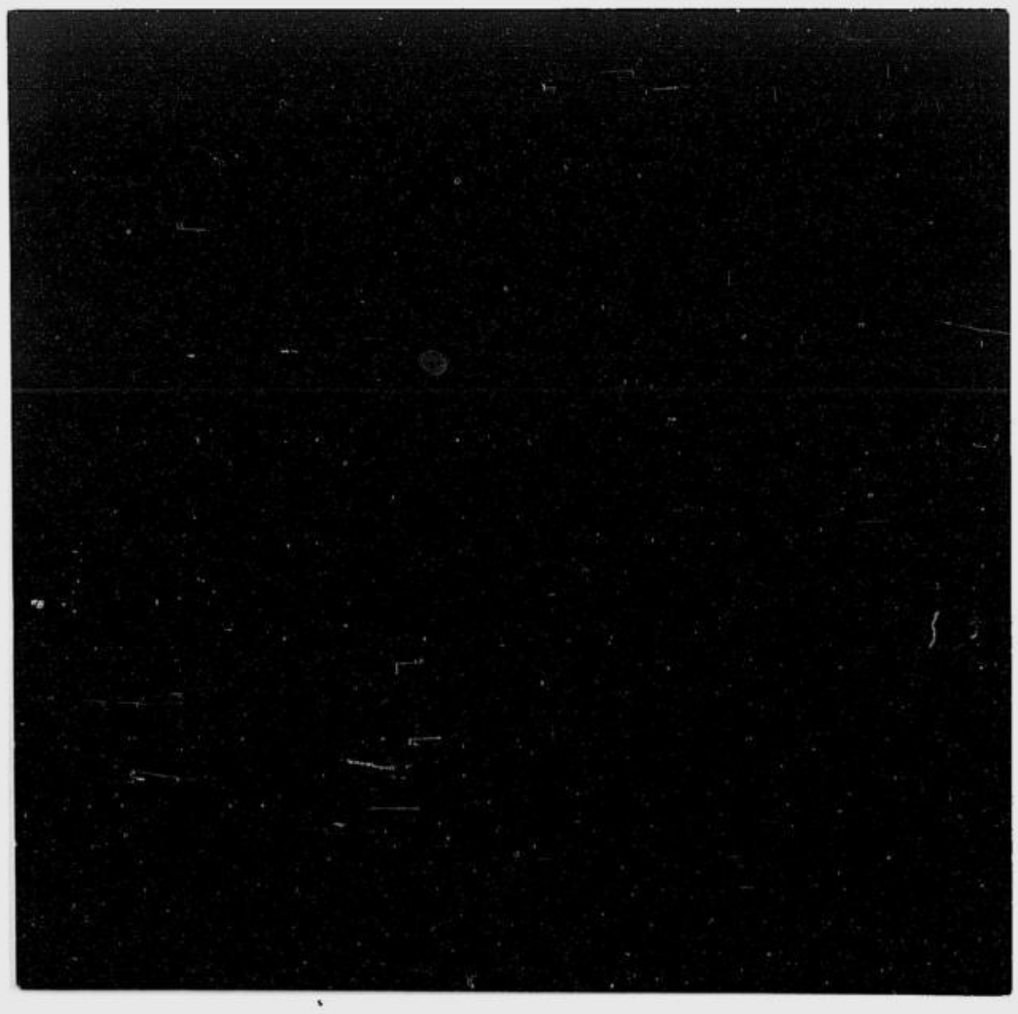

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